



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6904

LCO No. 5810



Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS

Introduced by:
(GAE)

AN ACT CONCERNING CAMPAIGN FINANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 9-601b of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
3 *passage*):

4 (b) The term "expenditure" does not mean:

5 (1) A loan of money, made in the ordinary course of business, by a
6 state or national bank;

7 (2) A communication made by any corporation, organization or
8 association solely to its members, owners, stockholders, executive or
9 administrative personnel, or their families;

10 (3) Nonpartisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns by
11 any corporation, organization or association aimed at its members,
12 owners, stockholders, executive or administrative personnel, or their
13 families;

14 (4) Uncompensated services provided by individuals volunteering
15 their time on behalf of a party committee, political committee, slate
16 committee or candidate committee, including any services provided for
17 the benefit of nonparticipating and participating candidates under the
18 Citizens' Election Program and any unreimbursed travel expenses made
19 by an individual who volunteers the individual's personal services to
20 any such committee. For purposes of this subdivision, an individual is
21 a volunteer if such individual is not receiving compensation for such
22 services regardless of whether such individual received compensation
23 in the past or may receive compensation for similar services that may be
24 performed in the future;

25 (5) Any news story, commentary or editorial distributed through the
26 facilities of any broadcasting station, newspaper, magazine or other
27 periodical, unless such facilities are owned or controlled by any political
28 party, committee or candidate;

29 (6) The use of real or personal property, a portion or all of the cost of
30 invitations and the cost of food or beverages, voluntarily provided by
31 an individual to a candidate, including a nonparticipating or
32 participating candidate under the Citizens' Election Program, or to a
33 party, political or slate committee, in rendering voluntary personal
34 services at the individual's residential premises or a community room
35 in the individual's residence facility, to the extent that the cumulative
36 value of the invitations, food or beverages provided by an individual on
37 behalf of any candidate or committee does not exceed four hundred
38 dollars with respect to any single event or does not exceed eight
39 hundred dollars for any such event hosted by two or more individuals,
40 provided at least one such individual owns or resides at the residential
41 premises, and further provided the cumulative value of the invitations,
42 food or beverages provided by an individual on behalf of any such
43 candidate or committee does not exceed eight hundred dollars with
44 respect to a calendar year or single election, as the case may be;

45 (7) A communication described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of
46 this section that includes speech or expression made (A) prior to the

47 ninety-day period preceding the date of a primary or an election at
48 which the clearly identified candidate or candidates are seeking
49 nomination to public office or position, that is made for the purpose of
50 influencing any legislative or administrative action, as defined in section
51 1-91, or executive action, or (B) during a legislative session for the
52 purpose of influencing legislative action;

53 (8) An organization expenditure by a party committee, legislative
54 caucus committee or legislative leadership committee;

55 (9) A commercial advertisement that refers to an owner, director or
56 officer of a business entity who is also a candidate and that had
57 previously been broadcast or appeared when the owner, director or
58 officer was not a candidate;

59 (10) A communication containing an endorsement on behalf of a
60 candidate for nomination or election to the office of Governor,
61 Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, State
62 Comptroller, Attorney General, state senator or state representative,
63 from a candidate for the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
64 Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, State Comptroller, Attorney
65 General, state senator or state representative, shall not be an
66 expenditure attributable to the endorsing candidate, if the candidate
67 making the endorsement is unopposed at the time of the
68 communication;

69 (11) A communication that is sent by mail to addresses in the district
70 for which a candidate being endorsed by another candidate pursuant to
71 the provisions of this subdivision is seeking nomination or election to
72 the office of state senator or state representative, containing an
73 endorsement on behalf of such candidate for such nomination or
74 election, from a candidate for the office of state senator or state
75 representative, shall not be an expenditure attributable to the endorsing
76 candidate, if the candidate making the endorsement is not seeking
77 election to the office of state senator or state representative for a district
78 that contains any geographical area shared by the district for the office

79 to which the endorsed candidate is seeking nomination or election;

80 (12) Campaign training events provided to multiple individuals by a
81 legislative caucus committee and any associated materials, provided the
82 cumulative value of such events and materials does not exceed six
83 thousand dollars in the aggregate for a calendar year;

84 (13) A lawful communication by any charitable organization which is
85 a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
86 Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal
87 revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended;

88 (14) The use of offices, telephones, computers and similar equipment
89 provided by a party committee, legislative caucus committee or
90 legislative leadership committee that serve as headquarters for or are
91 used by such party committee, legislative caucus committee or
92 legislative leadership committee; [or]

93 (15) An expense or expenses incurred by a human being acting alone
94 in an amount that is two hundred dollars or less, in the aggregate, that
95 benefits a candidate for a single election; or

96 (16) A solicitation via the Internet for a contribution to any committee,
97 provided any such contribution described in this subdivision shall be
98 construed to be an expenditure.

99 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 9-612 of the general statutes is
100 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
101 *passage*):

102 (a) No individual shall make a contribution or contributions in any
103 one calendar year in excess of [ten] fifteen thousand dollars to the state
104 central committee of any party, or for the benefit of such committee
105 pursuant to its authorization or request; or two thousand dollars to a
106 town committee of any political party, or for the benefit of such
107 committee pursuant to its authorization or request; or two thousand
108 dollars to a legislative caucus committee or legislative leadership

109 committee, or one thousand dollars to any other political committee
110 other than (1) a political committee formed solely to aid or promote the
111 success or defeat of a referendum question, (2) an exploratory
112 committee, (3) a political committee established by an organization, or
113 for the benefit of such committee pursuant to its authorization or
114 request, or (4) a political committee formed by a slate of candidates in a
115 primary for the office of justice of the peace of the same town.

116 Sec. 3. Subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 9-618 of the general
117 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
118 (*Effective from passage*):

119 (2) No legislative caucus committee or legislative leadership
120 committee shall make a contribution or contributions in any calendar
121 year to, or for the benefit of, the state central committee of a political
122 party, in excess of [ten] fifteen thousand dollars.

123 Sec. 4. Subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 9-619 of the general
124 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
125 (*Effective from passage*):

126 (2) No legislative caucus committee or legislative leadership
127 committee shall make a contribution or contributions in any calendar
128 year to, or for the benefit of, the state central committee of a political
129 party, in excess of [ten] fifteen thousand dollars.

130 Sec. 5. Subdivision (1) of subsection (g) of section 9-7a of the general
131 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
132 (*Effective from passage*):

133 (g) (1) (A) In the case of a written complaint filed with the commission
134 pursuant to section 9-7b, commission staff shall conduct and complete a
135 preliminary examination of such complaint by the fourteenth day
136 following its receipt, at which time such staff shall, at its discretion, [(A)]
137 (i) dismiss the complaint for failure to allege any substantial violation of
138 state election law supported by evidence, [(B)] (ii) engage the
139 respondent in discussions in an effort to speedily resolve any matter

140 pertaining to a de minimis violation, or [(C)] (iii) investigate and docket
141 the complaint for a determination by the commission that probable
142 cause or no probable cause exists for any such violation. If commission
143 staff dismisses a complaint pursuant to subparagraph [(A)] (A)(i) of this
144 subdivision, such staff shall provide a brief written statement concisely
145 setting forth the reasons for such dismissal. If commission staff engages
146 a respondent pursuant to subparagraph [(B)] (A)(ii) of this subdivision
147 but is unable to speedily resolve any such matter described in said
148 subparagraph by the forty-fifth day following receipt of the complaint,
149 such staff shall docket such complaint for a determination by the
150 commission that probable cause or no probable cause exists for any
151 violation of state election law. If the commission does not, by the sixtieth
152 day following receipt of the complaint, either issue a decision or render
153 its determination that probable cause or no probable cause exists for any
154 violation of state election laws, the complainant or respondent may
155 apply to the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford for an
156 order to show cause why the commission has not acted upon the
157 complaint and to provide evidence that the commission has
158 unreasonably delayed action.

159 (B) (i) For any complaint received on or after January 1, 2018, but prior
160 to July 1, 2023, if the commission does not, by one year following receipt
161 of such complaint, issue a decision thereon, the commission shall
162 dismiss such complaint, provided the length of time of any delay caused
163 by [(i)] (I) the commission or commission staff granting any extension
164 or continuance to a respondent prior to the issuance of any such
165 decision, [(ii)] (II) any subpoena issued in connection with such
166 complaint, [(iii)] (III) any litigation in state or federal court related to
167 such complaint, or [(iv)] (IV) any investigation by, or consultation of the
168 commission or commission staff with, the Chief State's Attorney, the
169 Attorney General, the United States Department of Justice or the United
170 States Attorney for Connecticut related to such complaint, shall be
171 added to such one year.

172 (ii) For any complaint received on or after July 1, 2023, if the
173 commission does not, by one year following receipt of such complaint,

174 find reason to believe that a violation of state election law has been
 175 committed and commence a contested case, as defined in section 4-166,
 176 the commission shall dismiss such complaint, provided the length of
 177 time of any delay caused by (I) the commission or commission staff
 178 granting any extension or continuance to a respondent prior to the
 179 issuance of any such decision, (II) any subpoena issued in connection
 180 with such complaint, (III) any litigation in state or federal court related
 181 to such complaint, (IV) any investigation by the commission or
 182 commission staff involving a potential violation of state election law by
 183 a foreign national or of section 9-601c or 9-601d, or (V) any investigation
 184 by, or consultation of the commission or commission staff with, the
 185 Chief State's Attorney, the Attorney General, the United States
 186 Department of Justice or the United States Attorney for Connecticut
 187 related to such complaint, shall be added to such one year.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	9-601b(b)
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	9-612(a)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	9-618(d)(2)
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	9-619(d)(2)
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	9-7a(g)(1)

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) specify that certain online solicitations for political contributions are excluded from the definition of "expenditure", (2) increase the limit on contributions to state central committees, and (3) allow extensions to the required dismissal time frame for investigations by the State Elections Enforcement Commission concerning foreign spending and independent expenditures.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]