

Campaign Finance Transparency Law Passes General Assembly

Dover, DE – By a 38 – 2 vote, the House today passed legislation to increase transparency of campaign contributions by corporations and other entities. Previously, corporations could contribute without any person taking responsibility for the donation, making it more difficult for the public to determine who was behind a contribution. [Senate Bill 186](#) requires that these contributors disclose the name and address of one “responsible party”—someone who shares or exercises direction or control over the entity’s activities.

SB 186 passed the Senate earlier this month by a 12-9 vote and now heads to the Governor’s desk. The bill builds on passage earlier this week of legislation to create a more unified and efficient structure for conducting elections, while making it easier to report and investigate campaign finance violations. (More information pasted below.)

“A transparent campaign finance system is required to help voters make informed decisions and to help ensure contributors operate within contribution requirements,” said Governor Markell. “With passage of a set of important elections bills this week, as well as [increased disclosure requirements in recent years](#), we have taken important steps to strengthen this essential part of our democracy.”

SB 186 – Transparency of Entity Contributions

Sponsors: Sen. Margaret Rose Henry (D-Wilmington East); Rep. Michael Mulrooney (D-Penwood)

- Requires that entities must disclose name & address of one “responsible party”—someone who shares or exercises direction or control over entity’s activities.
- Requires that Elections Commissioner adopt uniform

summary of law governing attribution of entity contributions, including examples of how law applies in specific cases.

- This summary must be posted on the Elections Commissioner's web site, and political committees must provide summary to any entity contributor that requests it.

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June 24, 2014

Legislation to Reform Delaware Election Laws Passes General Assembly

Dover, DE –Following efforts by the Governor and legislators to address the transparency and efficiency of Delaware elections, the Senate today passed House Substitute 1 to House Bill 302—a bill that will create a more unified and efficient structure for conducting elections, while making it easier to report and investigate campaign finance violations.

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Earl Jacques (D-Glasgow) and Sen. Margaret Rose Henry (D-Wilmington East), was part of a series of election law proposals crafted this year with the Governor's support. A second piece of legislation, which addresses campaign finance issues arising from contributions from joint accounts (House Bill 301), also passed the Senate today by a 21-0 vote. HS 1 to HB 302 and HB 301 now head to the Governor's desk.

“Both HS 1 to HB 302 and HB 301 will improve our elections system, and I thank the General Assembly for sending them to my desk for signature,” said Governor Markell. “In particular, HS 1 to HB 302 will improve the efficiency of our elections system, will provide citizens with a mechanism for citizens to report campaign finance violations, and will provide necessary resources to investigate those possible violations. These bills further build on our continuing efforts to make our

elections system more transparent and effective.”

HS 1 to HB 302 will:

- Consolidate the 3 existing county Boards of Election into a single State Board of Elections, as recommended by the Title 15 Task Force. As is the case with the existing county Boards, members would be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and political balance would be required.
- Require the State Election Commissioner to establish procedures that will allow citizens to report possible violations of Delaware’s campaign finance laws, including anonymous reports.
- Authorize the Election Commissioner to hire investigators to examine possible violations and, if required, to refer such potential violations to the Attorney General for prosecution.
- Authorize the Commissioner to prepare and publish manuals explaining the duties and responsibilities of individuals, political committees, and others covered by Delaware’s campaign finance and other election laws.

HB 301, sponsored by Rep. Trey Paradee (D-Cheswold) and Sen. David Sokola (D-Newark), would provide for clearer attribution of contributions from joint accounts by:

- Requiring that contributions from joint accounts (including but not limited to bank accounts) must be attributed to the person signing the check or authorizing the payment; and
- Establishing procedures for reallocation of contributions from joint accounts.

Proposals during this legislative session represent continued progress in Governor Markell’s effort to improve Delaware’s campaign finance laws. In 2012, the Governor proposed and the General Assembly passed the Delaware Elections Disclosure

Act, which increased disclosure requirements, closed a loophole in Delaware's election laws, and made other improvements to Delaware's campaign finance laws. Additional legislation in 2012 increased fines for campaign finance violations.

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