

Government Oversight Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7093

AN ACT CONCERNING REFERENDA, INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES AND

Title: OTHER CAMPAIGN FINANCE CHANGES.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/6/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Oversight Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to bring Connecticut's campaign financing laws in line with federal court rulings and case law regarding independent expenditure political committees and aggregate contribution limits for individuals, makes clarifications about disclaimers on referendum, advertising, and independent expenditures regarding referendums to ensure transparency and consistent application of these laws. This bill fixes a statutory issue regarding the timeline for campaign committees returning CEP funds, extends the time required for the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) to resolve complaints to ensure that whatever decision is reached is not rushed, establishes requirements for how many in-state contributions are needed for statewide races, and clarifies individual contribution limits to campaigns.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Shannon Kief: Legal Program Director State Elections Enforcement Commission:

Ms. Kief explained SEEC's support for the measures provided in this bill. She noted that while every aspect of the bill is a priority for SEEC, the attribution of referendum advertisements should be prioritized if the committee can only address one aspect, especially given the possibility of constitutional referendums that could garner national attention. She explained that the bill implements federal court rulings on independent expenditure political committees and makes statutory adjustments to comply with *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*, 572 U.S. 185 (2014). She also explained that the bill would explicitly clarify that referendum spending is a type of independent expenditure and – as previously mentioned – would require attribution for referendum advertising by way of television, radio, or phone.

Finally, she explained the provisions extending the time required for campaign committees to return CEP funds, extending the deadline by which SEEC must issue a decision on a case, and adjusting the number of in-district contributions needed for statewide candidates for the CEP.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jim Heckman, General Counsel, Connecticut Realtors:

Mr. Heckman expressed his support for this bill, explaining that it would bring the current system for independent expenditures in line with the corresponding federal system. He also noted that it would clear up some ambiguity concerning disclaimer procedures and referendum advertising.

Pamela Klem, Campaign Finance Specialist, League of Women Voters:

Ms. Klem expressed her support for all the provisions in this bill that would bring Connecticut's laws around campaign financing more in line with federal laws.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 3/25/2025