



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 5352

LCO No. 2166



Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Introduced by:
(GOS)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION.

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (g) of section 9-7a of the 2026 supplement to the
2 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

4 (g) (1) (A) In the case of a written complaint filed with the commission
5 pursuant to section 9-7b, commission staff shall conduct and complete a
6 preliminary examination of such complaint by the fourteenth day
7 following its receipt, at which time such staff shall, at its discretion, (i)
8 dismiss the complaint for failure to allege any substantial violation of
9 state election law supported by evidence, (ii) engage the respondent in
10 discussions in an effort to speedily resolve any matter pertaining to a de
11 minimis violation, or (iii) investigate and docket the complaint for a
12 determination by the commission that probable cause or no probable
13 cause exists for any such violation. If commission staff dismisses a
14 complaint pursuant to subparagraph (A)(i) of this subdivision, such
15 staff shall provide a brief written statement concisely setting forth the

16 reasons for such dismissal. If commission staff engages a respondent
17 pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii) of this subdivision but is unable to
18 speedily resolve any such matter described in said subparagraph by the
19 forty-fifth day following receipt of the complaint, such staff shall docket
20 such complaint for a determination by the commission that probable
21 cause or no probable cause exists for any violation of state election law.
22 If the commission does not, by the sixtieth day following receipt of the
23 complaint, either issue a decision or render its determination that
24 probable cause or no probable cause exists for any violation of state
25 election laws, the complainant or respondent may apply to the superior
26 court for the judicial district of Hartford for an order to show cause why
27 the commission has not acted upon the complaint and to provide
28 evidence that the commission has unreasonably delayed action.

29 (B) (i) For any complaint received on or after January 1, 2018, if the
30 commission does not, by one year following receipt of such complaint,
31 issue a decision thereon, the commission shall dismiss such complaint,
32 provided the length of time of any delay caused by (I) the commission
33 or commission staff granting any extension or continuance to a
34 respondent prior to the issuance of any such decision, (II) any subpoena
35 issued in connection with such complaint, (III) any litigation in state or
36 federal court related to such complaint, or (IV) any investigation by, or
37 consultation of the commission or commission staff with, the Chief
38 State's Attorney, the Attorney General, the United States Department of
39 Justice or the United States Attorney for Connecticut related to such
40 complaint, shall be added to such one year.

41 (ii) The provisions of subparagraph (B)(i) of this subdivision shall not
42 apply to any complaint received on or after July 1, 2024, that relates to a
43 potential violation of state election law by a foreign national, or to any
44 complaint received on or after October 1, 2026, that relates to a potential
45 violation of any provision of chapter 151.

46 (C) For any complaint received on or after July 1, 2024, if the
47 commission does not, by the ninetieth day following the commission's

48 determination that probable cause exists for any violation of state
49 election laws, issue a decision on such complaint, the commission shall
50 refer such complaint to the Chief State's Attorney pursuant to
51 subdivision (8) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b for further enforcement
52 action. Not later than twelve months after the referral to the Chief State's
53 Attorney of any complaint under this subdivision, or not later than the
54 expiration of the period of time prescribed by section 54-193 for the
55 violation of state election laws alleged in any such complaint, whichever
56 occurs first, the Chief State's Attorney shall submit a report to the joint
57 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
58 matters relating to elections and the judiciary, in accordance with the
59 provisions of section 11-4a, detailing the status of any enforcement
60 action related to such referred complaint.

61 (2) In the case of a statement filed by the Secretary of the State with
62 the commission pursuant to section 9-7b on or after July 1, 2015, if the
63 commission does not, by the thirtieth day following such filing, make a
64 determination to investigate such statement and, by the ninetieth day
65 following such filing, complete any investigation of such statement and
66 issue a decision, the Secretary may apply to the superior court for the
67 judicial district of Hartford for an order to show cause why the
68 commission has not acted upon the statement and to provide evidence
69 that the commission has unreasonably delayed action.

70 (3) Any judicial proceeding pursuant to subdivision (1) or (2) of this
71 subsection shall be privileged with respect to assignment for trial. The
72 commission shall appear and give appropriate explanation in the
73 matter. The court may, in its discretion, order the commission to: (A)
74 Continue to proceed pursuant to section 9-7b, (B) act by a date certain,
75 or (C) refer the complaint or statement to the Chief State's Attorney.
76 Nothing in this subsection shall require the commission, in any
77 proceeding brought pursuant to this subsection, to disclose records or
78 documents which are not required to be disclosed pursuant to
79 subsection (b) of section 1-210. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude
80 the commission from continuing its investigation or taking any action

81 permitted by section 9-7b, unless otherwise ordered by the court. The
82 commission or any other party may, within seven days after a decision
83 by the court under this subsection, file an appeal of the decision with
84 the Appellate Court.

85 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 9-706 of the 2026 supplement to the
86 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
87 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

88 (d) (1) In accordance with the provisions of subsection (g) of this
89 section, the commission shall review the application and determine
90 whether (A) the candidate committee for the applicant has received the
91 required qualifying contributions, (B) in the case of an application for a
92 grant from the fund for a convention campaign, the applicant has met
93 the applicable condition under subsection (a) of this section for applying
94 for such grant and complied with the provisions of subsections (b) and
95 (c) of this section, (C) in the case of an application for a grant from the
96 fund for a primary campaign, the applicant has met the applicable
97 condition under subsection (a) of this section for applying for such grant
98 and complied with the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this
99 section, (D) in the case of an application for a grant from the fund for a
100 general election campaign, the applicant has met the applicable
101 condition under subsection (a) of this section for applying for such grant
102 and complied with the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this
103 section, and (E) in the case of an application by a minor party or
104 petitioning party candidate for a grant from the fund for a general
105 election campaign, the applicant qualifies as an eligible minor party
106 candidate or an eligible petitioning party candidate, whichever is
107 applicable.

108 (2) During such review of the application:

109 (A) If the commission deems a contribution received by the candidate
110 committee not to be a qualifying contribution, the commission shall
111 advise the treasurer of the candidate committee of such determination

112 and cite the applicable reason and provision of law for such
113 determination and shall return the contribution to such treasurer based
114 on the information provided on the applicable contribution certification
115 form;

116 (B) [For] Except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision,
117 for purposes of deeming a contribution a qualifying contribution, there
118 shall be a presumption that information provided on a contribution
119 certification form is true and correct, which presumption may only be
120 rebutted by proof to the contrary based on a prior investigative finding
121 of the commission; [and]

122 (C) Whenever the documents submitted with a grant application
123 indicate the likelihood that any contribution was given in a name other
124 than that of the person making the contribution, the commission may
125 deem such contribution not to be qualifying if evidence is presented to
126 the commission supporting such a finding. In making such a finding,
127 the commission shall consider (i) the representations by any candidate,
128 treasurer, deputy treasurer or solicitor who solicited the contribution;
129 (ii) the representations of the contributor or alleged contributor; (iii) the
130 past contribution history of the contributor; (iv) representations by third
131 parties with knowledge of the transaction; and (v) whether such
132 contribution is related to other contributions that may have been given
133 in the name of another; and

134 [(C)] (D) The commission shall not disqualify any contribution from
135 being deemed a qualifying contribution for reason that (i) the residential
136 address associated with such contribution does not match the billing
137 address associated with such contribution, or (ii) such contribution was
138 made in response to an electronically shared link to a fundraising
139 Internet web site or invitation to a fundraising event.

140 (3) If the commission approves an application, the commission shall
141 determine the amount of the grant payable to the candidate committee
142 for the applicant pursuant to section 9-705 from the fund, and notify the

143 State Comptroller and the candidate of such candidate committee of
144 such amount. In so notifying the State Comptroller, the commission
145 shall (A) ensure that the qualified candidate committee of an applicant
146 is entitled to a full grant for the general election campaign only if (i) the
147 applicant's written certification under subsection (b) of this section
148 affirms that such committee received the required qualifying
149 contributions under section 9-704 prior to the seventieth day before the
150 election, and (ii) the cumulative itemized accounting under subsection
151 (c) of this section demonstrates that the applicant reasonably believes
152 such written certification to be true and correct, and (B) advise the State
153 Comptroller accordingly. If the timing of the commission's approval of
154 the grant for a primary campaign or general election campaign in
155 relation to the Secretary of the State's determination of ballot status is
156 such that the commission cannot determine whether the qualified
157 candidate committee is entitled to the applicable full initial grant for the
158 primary or election or the applicable partial grant for the primary or
159 election, as the case may be, the commission shall approve the lesser
160 applicable partial initial grant. The commission shall then authorize the
161 payment of the remaining portion of the applicable primary campaign
162 or general election campaign grant after the commission has knowledge
163 of the circumstances regarding the ballot status of the opposing
164 candidates in such primary or election. Not later than thirty days
165 following notification by the commission in the case of a convention
166 campaign grant, or not later than two business days following
167 notification by the commission in the case of any other grant, the State
168 Comptroller shall draw an order on the State Treasurer for payment of
169 any such approved amount to the qualified candidate committee from
170 the fund.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	9-7a(g)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	9-706(d)

Statement of Purpose:

To exempt from the one-year requirement for completion of commission investigations such investigations of voting-related complaints under chapter 151 and grants the commission the ability to not qualify straw contributions if the certification card, together with external evidence make it likely that the source of the money is different from the name on the certification card.

[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.]