AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 31, 2012
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 17, 2012
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2012
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 1648

Introduced by Assembly Member Brownley
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Fong and Gatto)
(Coauthors: Senators Hancock, Leno, Lieu, Pavley, and Yee)

February 13, 2012

An act to amend Sections 84305.5, 84504, and 84505 of, to add Sections 84506.1, 84506.2, and 84506.3 to, to repeal Sections 84502, 84503, and 84506.5 of, and to repeal and add Sections 84501, 84506, 84507, and 84508 of, the Government Code, relating to the Political Reform Act of 1974, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST


The Political Reform Act of 1974 regulates mass mailings, known as slate mailers, that support or oppose multiple candidates or ballot
measures for an election. The act requires that each slate mailer identify the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures that is sending the slate mailer, and to contain other specified information in specified formatting. The act requires that each candidate and each ballot measure that has paid to appear in the slate mailer be designated by an asterisk.

This bill would instead require that a candidate or ballot measure appearing in the slate mailer be designated by an asterisk if the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures that is sending the slate mailer has received payment to include the candidate or ballot measure in the slate mailer. The bill would also recast the language of the prescribed notice to voters that must be included on a slate mailer.

The act also regulates advertisements, which are defined as any general or public advertisement that is authorized and paid for by a person or committee for the purpose supporting or opposing a candidate for elective office or a ballot measure or ballot measures. The act places certain disclosure requirements on advertisements for or against any ballot measure, including that the advertisement disclose any person who has made cumulative contributions of $50,000 or more, as prescribed. The act places more specific disclosure requirements on broadcast or mass mailing advertisements that are paid for by independent expenditures that support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure.

This bill would repeal provisions relating to disclosures for advertisements paid for by an independent expenditure and required disclosures of persons who have made cumulative contributions of $50,000 or more. This bill would, instead, impose specified disclosure requirements on radio, television, and video advertisements, and certain mass mailing and print advertisements that support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure or solicit contributions in support of those purposes. The bill would require radio, television, and video advertisements that are authorized by a candidate or agent of the candidate to include a statement in which the candidate identifies himself or herself and states that he or she approves the message, as specified. The bill would require radio, television, video, and certain mass mailings and print advertisements that are not authorized by a candidate or an agent of the candidate to disclose, in a prescribed format, the 3 largest identifiable contributors, as defined, of the committee that paid for the advertisement. The bill would require mass mailings or print
advertisements that are paid for by certain persons who are not committees to disclose the name of that person as the funder of the mass mailing or print advertisement. The bill would also require that certain committees establish and maintain a committee disclosure Internet Web site, as defined, which discloses the top 10 identifiable contributors and provides a link to either the Internet Web site maintained by the Secretary of State for campaign finance disclosures of the committee, or a page on the committee disclosure Internet Web site that discloses all identifiable contributors to that committee, as specified. The bill would require these advertisements to identify the address for the committee disclosure Internet Web site.

Existing law makes a knowing or willful violation of the Political Reform Act of 1974 a misdemeanor and subjects offenders to criminal penalties.

This bill would impose a state-mandated local program by creating additional crimes.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The Political Reform Act of 1974, an initiative measure, provides that the Legislature may amend the act to further the act’s purposes upon a 2/3 vote of each house and compliance with specified procedural requirements.

This bill would declare that it furthers the purposes of the act.

>This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.


State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 84305.5 of the Government Code is amended to read:

84305.5. (a) A slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures shall not send a slate mailer unless the slate mailer complies with all of the following:
(1) The name, street address, and city of the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures are shown on the outside of each piece of slate mail and on at least one of the inserts included with each piece of slate mail in no less than 8-point roman type, which shall be in a color or print that contrasts with the background so as to be easily legible. A post office box may be stated in lieu of a street address if the street address of the slate mailer organization or the committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures is a matter of public record with the Secretary of State’s Political Reform Division.

(2) At the top or bottom of the front side or surface of at least one insert, or at the top or bottom of one side or surface of a postcard or other self-mailer, there is a notice in at least 8-point roman boldface type, which shall be in a color or print that contrasts with the background so as to be easily legible, and in a printed or drawn box and set apart from any other printed matter. The notice shall consist of the following statement:

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NOTICE TO VOTERS

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED BY (name of slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures), NOT AN OFFICIAL POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATION. Appearance in this mailer does not necessarily imply endorsement of others appearing in this mailer, nor does it imply endorsement of, or opposition to, any issues set forth in this mailer. Appearance by each candidate and ballot measure that is designated by an * has been paid for.
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(3) (A) Each candidate and each ballot measure for which the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures has received payment to include the candidate or ballot measure in the slate mailer is designated by an *. A candidate or ballot measure for which the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures has not received payment
to include the candidate or ballot measure in the slate mailer shall not be designated by an *

(B) The * required by this paragraph shall be of the same type size, type style, color or contrast, and legibility as is used for the name of the candidate, or the ballot measure name or number and position advocated, to which the * designation applies, except that in no case shall the * be required to be larger than 10-point boldface type. The designation shall immediately follow the name of the candidate, or the name or number and position advocated on the ballot measure, where the designation appears in the slate of candidates and measures. If there is no slate listing, the designation shall appear at least once in at least 8-point boldface type, immediately following the name of the candidate, or the name or number and position advocated on the ballot measure.

(4) The name of a candidate appearing in the slate mailer who is a member of a political party differing from the political party that the mailer appears by representation or indicia to represent is accompanied, immediately below the name, by the party designation of the candidate, in no less than 9-point roman type, which shall be in a color or print that contrasts with the background so as to be easily legible. The designation shall not be required in the case of candidates for nonpartisan office.

(b) The name, street address, and city of the slate mailer organization or committee primarily formed to support or oppose one or more ballot measures, as required by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), and the notice required by paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) may appear on the same side or surface of an insert in the slate mailer.

SEC. 2. Section 84501 of the Government Code is repealed.

SEC. 3. Section 84501 is added to the Government Code, to read:

84501. For purposes of this article, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) (1) “Advertisement” means any general or public advertisement which is authorized and paid for by a person or committee for the purpose of supporting or opposing a candidate for elective office or a ballot measure or ballot measures.

(2) “Advertisement” does not include a communication from an organization other than a political party to its members, a campaign button smaller than 10 inches in diameter, a bumper
sticker smaller than 60 square inches, or other advertisement as determined by regulations of the Commission.

(b) “Committee disclosure Internet Web site” means the Internet Web site for a committee identifying the top identifiable contributors to that committee, as described in Section 84506.3.

(c) “Cumulative contributions” means the cumulative amount of contributions received by a committee beginning 18 months prior to the date the committee made its first expenditure to support, or oppose a candidate for elective office or a ballot measure or ballot measures and ending seven days before the advertisement is sent to the printer or broadcast station or uploaded to the Internet.

(d) “Identifiable contributor” means a person or committee that has made cumulative contributions of at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000) to a committee.

SEC. 4. Section 84502 of the Government Code is repealed.
SEC. 5. Section 84503 of the Government Code is repealed.
SEC. 6. Section 84504 of the Government Code is amended to read:

84504. (a) Any committee that supports or opposes one or more ballot measures shall name and identify itself using a name or phrase that clearly identifies the economic or other special interest of its major donors of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) or more in any reference to the committee required by law, including, but not limited, to its statement of organization filed pursuant to Section 84101.

(b) If the major donors of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) or more share a common employer, the identity of the employer shall also be disclosed.

(c) Any committee which supports or opposes a ballot measure shall print or broadcast its name as provided in this section as part of any advertisement or other paid public statement, unless the advertisement is required to include a disclosure pursuant to any other section of this article.

(d) If candidates or their controlled committees, as a group or individually, meet the contribution thresholds for a person, they shall be identified by the controlling candidate’s name.

SEC. 7. Section 84505 of the Government Code is amended to read:
84505. In addition to the requirements of Sections 84504, 84506, 84506.1, 84506.2, and 84506.3, the committee placing the advertisement or persons acting in concert with that committee shall be prohibited from creating or using a noncandidate-controlled committee or a nonsponsored committee to avoid, or that results in the avoidance of, the disclosure of any individual, industry, business entity, controlled committee, or sponsored committee as a major funding source.

SEC. 8. Section 84506 of the Government Code is repealed.

SEC. 9. Section 84506 is added to the Government Code, to read:

84506. (a) A radio advertisement that supports or opposes a candidate or ballot measure or solicits contributions in support of that purpose shall, if the advertisement is authorized by a candidate or an agent of the candidate, include an audio statement in which the candidate identifies himself or herself and states that the candidate has approved the message.

(b) A radio advertisement that supports or opposes a candidate or ballot measure or solicits contributions in support of that purpose shall, if the advertisement is not authorized by a candidate or an agent of the candidate, include at the end of the advertisement a disclosure read in a clearly spoken manner in a pitch and tone substantially similar to the rest of the advertisement that reads as follows: “Top funders of this ad are [state names in descending order of identifiable contributors who made the three largest cumulative contributions to the committee that paid for the advertisement]. Full funding details at [state Internet Web site address of the committee disclosure Internet Web site].”

(c) If there are fewer than three identifiable contributors, the disclosure shall be adjusted accordingly to disclose the qualifying identifiable contributors, if any. If the committee does not have any identifiable contributors, but the committee has received cumulative contributions totaling at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000), the disclosure shall be adjusted to include the name of the committee in the place of the names of identifiable contributors.

SEC. 10. Section 84506.1 is added to the Government Code, to read:

84506.1. (a) A television or video advertisement that supports or opposes a candidate or ballot measure or solicits contributions in support of that purpose shall, if the advertisement is authorized
by a candidate or an agent of the candidate, include a statement in
which the candidate identifies himself or herself and states that
the candidate has approved the message. The candidate statement
shall be made using an unobscured, full-screen video of the
candidate making the statement, or by using an unobscured,
full-screen, and clearly identifiable photographic image of the
candidate that is displayed during an audio voiceover of the
candidate reading the statement.
(b) A television or video advertisement that supports or opposes
a candidate or ballot measure or solicits contributions in support
of that purpose shall, if the advertisement is not authorized by a
candidate or an agent of the candidate, include all of the following
at the end of the advertisement:
(1) A full-screen without audio on a black background for a
minimum of three seconds that is dedicated to the disclosure
described in this subdivision.
(2) The text “Top Funders for This Ad” located at the top of the
television or video display screen and centered horizontally. The
text shall be white in color and the font size shall be at least 5
percent of the height of the television or video display screen.
(3) Immediately below the text described in paragraph (2), the
logos, if any, as they appear on the Internet Web site homepage
of the identifiable contributor, for the identifiable contributors who
made the three largest cumulative contributions to the committee
that paid for the advertisement. Each logo shall occupy at least 15
percent of the width or height of the television or video display
screen and the logos shall be displayed from left to right in
descending order beginning with the largest identifiable contributor.
(4) Immediately below the logos, if any, described in paragraph
(3), or beneath the text described in paragraph (2) if no identifiable
contributor has a logo, the identifiable contributors who have made
the three largest cumulative contributions to the committee that
paid for the advertisement. The three identifiable contributors shall
each be disclosed on a separate vertical line, in descending order,
beginning with the identifiable contributor who made the largest
cumulative contribution on the first line. The name of each of the
three identifiable contributors shall be centered horizontally. The
text shall be white in color and the font size shall be at least 5
percent of the height of the television or video display screen.
(5) The text “Full Funding Details At [insert Internet Web site address of the committee disclosure Internet Web site].” The text shall be white in color and the font size shall be equivalent to 4 percent of the height of the television or video display screen. The text shall be located in a position that is vertically 4 percent above the bottom of the television or video display screen.

(6) If there are fewer than three identifiable contributors, the disclosure shall be adjusted accordingly to disclose only those that qualify as identifiable contributors, if any. If the committee does not have any identifiable contributors, but the committee has received cumulative contributions totaling at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000), the disclosure shall be adjusted to include the name of the committee in the place of the names of identifiable contributors.

SEC. 11. Section 84506.2 is added to the Government Code, to read:

84506.2. Except for slate mailers or advertisements that are authorized by a candidate or an agent of the candidate, any mass mailing or print advertisement that supports or opposes a candidate or ballot measure or solicits contributions in support of that purpose and that is paid for by a committee, or by any person who is not a committee and who spends more than one thousand dollars ($1,000) on mass mailing or print advertising cumulatively in the period beginning 18 months prior to the date the person made his or her first expenditure to qualify, support, or oppose the candidate for elective office or the ballot measure and ending seven days before the mass mailing or print advertisement is sent to the printer, shall include a disclosure area on the largest page of the mass mailing or print advertisement that meets all of the following criteria:

(a) The disclosure area shall be set apart from the rest of the page on which it is located by a line framing the disclosure area in the shape of a square or rectangle and the line shall be a color that is darker than the background color of the remainder of the disclosure area. The disclosure area within the border line shall have a solid background color that establishes a contrast to the color of the disclosure text that is equivalent to or greater than the text and background color contrast in the other areas of the mass mailing or print advertisement.
(b) For purposes of a mass mailing or print advertisement paid for by a committee, the disclosure shall include the following:

(1) The text “Top Funders of This Ad” shall be located at the top of the disclosure area and centered horizontally in the disclosure area. The text shall be in a font size of at least 14-point for pages smaller than 8.5 inches by 11 inches and at least 16-point for pages that are equal to, or larger than, 8.5 inches by 11 inches.

(2) Immediately below the text described in paragraph (1) shall be printed the logos, if any, as they appear on the Internet Web site homepage of the identifiable contributor, for the identifiable contributors who made the three largest cumulative contributions to the committee. Each logo shall occupy at least 8 percent of the width or height of the page on which the disclosure area is located and the logos shall be displayed from left to right in descending order beginning with the largest identifiable contributor.

(3) Immediately below the logos, if any, described in paragraph (2), or beneath the text described in paragraph (1) if no identifiable contributor has a logo, shall be identified by name the identifiable contributors who have made the three largest cumulative contributions to the committee that paid for the mass mailing or print advertisement. The three identifiable contributors shall each be disclosed on a separate vertical line, in descending order, beginning with the identifiable contributor who made the largest cumulative contribution on the first line. The name of each of the three identifiable contributors shall be centered horizontally. The text shall identify the identifiable contributor in a font size of at least 10-point for pages smaller than 8.5 inches by 11 inches and at least 12-point for pages that are equal to, or larger than, 8.5 inches by 11 inches.

(4) The text “Full Funding Details At [insert Internet Web site address of the committee disclosure Internet Web site].” The text shall be located at the bottom of the disclosure area and shall be in 10-point font size for pages smaller than 8.5 inches by 11 inches and at least 12-point font size for pages that are equal to, or larger than, 8.5 inches by 11 inches.

(5) If there are fewer than three identifiable contributors, the disclosure shall be adjusted accordingly to disclose the qualifying identifiable contributors, if any. If the committee does not have any identifiable contributors, but the committee has received cumulative contributions totaling at least ten thousand dollars
($10,000), the disclosure shall be adjusted to include the name of the committee in the place of the names of identifiable contributors.

(c) For purposes of a mass mailing or print advertisement paid for by a person who is not a committee and who spends more than one thousand dollars ($1,000) on mass mailings or print advertisements, as described in this section, the disclosure shall include the text “This advertisement funded by [insert name of the person who paid for the mass mailing or print advertisement].” The text shall be centered within the disclosure area and shall be in a font size of at least 14-point for pages smaller than 8.5 inches by 11 inches and at least 16-point for pages that are equal to, or larger than, 8.5 inches by 11 inches. The person shall not be required to create or maintain a disclosure Internet Web site described in Section 85406.3.

SEC. 12. Section 84506.3 is added to the Government Code, to read:

84506.3. Except for a committee that is controlled by a candidate, a committee that pays for an advertisement described in this article shall establish and maintain a committee disclosure Internet Web site. If the committee has an Internet Web site homepage, that Internet Web site may also serve as the committee disclosure Internet Web site. The homepage of the committee disclosure Internet Web site and any other Internet Web sites maintained by the committee shall include a disclosure statement area for the purpose of making a contribution disclosure statement that includes all of the following:

(a) The disclosure statement area shall be at least 250 pixels wide. The disclosure statement area shall have a white background and a border that is dark in color.

(b) A title that reads “Top Funders of This Committee.” The text shall be black in color and shall be at least 10-point font size.

(c) Immediately below the text described in subdivision (b), a list of the identifiable contributors who have made the 10 largest cumulative contributions to the committee. Each of the 10 identifiable contributors shall be disclosed on a separate vertical line, in descending order, beginning with the identifiable contributor who made the largest cumulative contribution on the first line. The text shall be black in color and shall be at least 9-point font size.
(d) Immediately below the text described in subdivision (c), the
logos, if any, as they appear on the Internet Web site homepage
of the identifiable contributor, for the identifiable contributors who
made the 10 largest cumulative contributions to the committee.
Each logo shall occupy at least 75 horizontal or vertical pixels and
shall be displayed from left to right in descending order beginning
with the largest identifiable contributor.

(e) Either of the following:
(1) A link to the Internet Web site maintained by the Secretary
of State that contains campaign finance disclosures made by the
committee pursuant to this title for the current election cycle. The
link shall be labeled “Full funding info at Secretary of State’s
Internet Web site.” The link shall be a standard hyperlink that is
displayed as blue underlined text in Arial equivalent font in at least
9-point font size.

(2) (A) A link to another page on the committee disclosure
Internet Web site that lists all of the committee’s identifiable
contributors. The link shall be labeled “More funding info” and
shall be a standard hyperlink that is displayed as blue underlined
text in Arial equivalent font in at least 9-point font size.

(B) The linked page on the committee disclosure Internet Web
site shall have a title that reads “$10,000 Funders of this
Committee.” The linked page shall disclose each identifiable
contributor of the committee on a separate vertical line, in
descending order, beginning with the identifiable contributor who
made the largest aggregate contribution on the first line. Each line
shall identify the name of the identifiable contributor and the
amount of that contributor’s aggregate contributions received by
the committee since its organization, current within seven days.

(f) If there are fewer than 10 identifiable contributors, the
disclosure shall be adjusted accordingly to disclose the qualifying
identifiable contributors, if any. If the committee does not have
any identifiable contributors, but the committee has received
cumulative contributions totaling at least ten thousand dollars
($10,000), the disclosure shall be adjusted to include the name of
the committee in the place of the names of identifiable contributors.

SEC. 13. Section 84506.5 of the Government Code is repealed.


SEC. 15. Section 84507 is added to the Government Code, to
read:
84507. For purposes of any disclosure required by Sections 84506 to 84506.3, inclusive, for advertisements that are not authorized by a candidate or an agent of the candidate, the following shall also apply in the event that an identifiable contributor is a person who is an individual:
(a) If the committee receiving the contribution is supporting or opposing a candidate, then the disclosure shall include the occupation and employer of the identifiable contributor in addition to the contributor’s name.
(b) If the committee receiving the contribution is supporting or opposing a ballot measure, and the passage or defeat of the ballot measure directly benefits or harms the employer of the identifiable contributor, then the disclosure shall include the occupation and employer of the identifiable contributor in addition to the contributor’s name. However, if an employer of an identifiable contributor is also an identifiable contributor of that committee, then the contributions of the employees shall, instead, be deemed to be contributions by the employer for purposes of determining the total cumulative contribution made by the employer in order to determine which identifiable contributors shall be disclosed on an advertisement pursuant to this article.
(c) If the committee receiving the contribution is supporting or opposing a ballot measure, and the passage or defeat of the ballot measure does not directly benefit or harm the employer of the identifiable contributor, then the disclosure shall include only the name of the identifiable contributor.

SEC. 17. Section 84508 is added to the Government Code, to read:
84508. Disclosures made pursuant to Sections 84506 to 84506.3, inclusive, shall be sufficient to identify the identifiable contributor but need not include such legal terms as “incorporated,” “committee,” “political action committee,” or “company,” or their abbreviations. Nothing in this section shall prevent a contributor from being disclosed as a name used in common usage or parlance, including, but not limited to, an abbreviation or acronym.
SEC. 18. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIIIB of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
Constitution.

SEC. 19. The Legislature finds and declares that this bill
furthers the purposes of the Political Reform Act of 1974 within
the meaning of subdivision (a) of Section 81012 of the Government
Code.

SEC. 20. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the
immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within
the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into
immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to ensure that the voters of California are able to make
informed decisions in elections and fully participate in an open
and transparent democracy that represents their true interests, it
is necessary for this act to take effect immediately as an urgency
statute.