

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred Senate  
3 Bill No. 47 entitled “An act relating to the persons authorized to make  
4 contributions to candidates and political parties” respectfully reports that it has  
5 considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out  
6 all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. § 2901 is amended to read:

8 § 2901. DEFINITIONS

9 As used in this chapter:

10 \* \* \*

11 (13) “Political committee” or “political action committee” means any  
12 formal or informal committee of two or more individuals or a corporation,  
13 labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not including a  
14 political party, that accepts contributions of \$1,000.00 or more and makes  
15 expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more in any two-year general election cycle for  
16 the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more candidates, influencing an  
17 election, or advocating a position on a public question in any election, or any  
18 such entity that registers as a political committee pursuant to section 2922 of  
19 this chapter prior to reaching those \$1,000.00 thresholds, and includes an  
20 independent expenditure-only political committee and a legislative leadership  
21 political committee.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

\* \* \*

Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. § 2922 is amended to read:

§ 2922. POLITICAL COMMITTEES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING  
ACCOUNT; TREASURER

(a)(1)(A) Each political committee shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of making expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more and accepting contributions of \$1,000.00 or more ~~stating~~, and any other political committee may register with the Secretary of State prior to reaching those \$1,000.00 thresholds.

(B) A political committee's name shall include the full name of its connected organization, if applicable, or any clearly recognized abbreviation or acronym by which the connected organization is commonly known.

(C) In its registration, a political committee shall state:

(i) its full name and address;

(ii) the name and address of the bank in which it maintains its campaign checking account; and

(iii) the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account; and

(iv) if applicable, the full name of its connected organization and any clearly recognized abbreviation or acronym by which the connected organization is commonly known.

1           (2)(A) In addition to the requirements of subdivision (1) of this  
2 subsection, a legislative leadership political committee shall designate in its  
3 registration that it is established as a legislative leadership political committee.

4           (B) The Secretary of State shall provide on his or her website a list of  
5 all legislative leadership political committees that have been designated as  
6 provided in this subdivision (2).

7           (b)(1) All expenditures by a political committee shall be paid by either a  
8 credit card or a debit card, check, or other electronic transfer from the single  
9 campaign checking account in the bank designated by the political committee  
10 under subsection (a) of this section, or, if under \$250.00, the political  
11 committee may make the expenditure from cash from that campaign checking  
12 account if accompanied by a receipt, a copy of which shall be maintained by  
13 the political committee for at least two years from the end of the two-year  
14 general election cycle in which the expenditure was made.

15           (2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the payment  
16 of fees required to be made from a separately held online account designated  
17 solely to collect campaign contributions made to the political committee.

18           (c) A political committee whose principal place of business or whose  
19 treasurer is not located in this State shall file a statement with the Secretary of  
20 State designating a person who resides in this State upon whom may be served  
21 any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon

1 the political committee. This statement shall be filed at the same time as the  
2 registration required in subsection (a) of this section.

3 (d) As used in this section, “connected organization” means the formal or  
4 informal committee of two or more individuals, corporation, labor  
5 organization, public interest group, or other entity that directly or indirectly  
6 establishes, administers, or financially supports a political committee. For  
7 purposes of this subsection:

8 (1) “Financially supports” does not include contributions to the political  
9 committee, but does include the payment of establishment, administration, and  
10 solicitation costs of the political committee; and

11 (2) Members of a connected organization, such as organizations that or  
12 individuals who are members of a trade association, labor organization, or  
13 public interest group that is a connected organization, shall not be considered  
14 to have directly or indirectly established, administered, or financially supported  
15 the connected organization’s political committee.

16 Sec. 3. 17 V.S.A. § 2941 is amended to read:

17 § 2941. LIMITATIONS OF CONTRIBUTIONS

18 (a) In any election cycle:

19 (1)(A) A candidate for State Representative or for local office shall not  
20 accept contributions totaling more than:

21 (i) \$1,000.00 from a single source; or

1 (ii) \$1,000.00 from a political committee.

2 (B) Such a candidate may accept unlimited contributions from a  
3 political party.

4 (2)(A) A candidate for State Senator or for county office shall not accept  
5 contributions totaling more than:

6 (i) \$1,500.00 from a single source; or

7 (ii) \$1,500.00 from a political committee.

8 (B) Such a candidate may accept unlimited contributions from a  
9 political party.

10 (3)(A) A candidate for the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor,  
11 Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Auditor of Accounts, or Attorney General  
12 shall not accept contributions totaling more than:

13 (i) \$4,000.00 from a single source; or

14 (ii) \$4,000.00 from a political committee.

15 (B) Such a candidate may accept unlimited contributions from a  
16 political party.

17 (4) A political committee shall not accept contributions totaling more  
18 than:

19 (A) \$4,000.00 from a single source;

20 (B) \$4,000.00 from a political committee; or

21 (C) \$4,000.00 from a political party.

1 (5) A political party shall not accept contributions totaling more than:

2 (A) \$10,000.00 from a single source;

3 (B) \$10,000.00 from a political committee; or

4 (C) \$60,000.00 from a political party.

5 (6) [Repealed.]

6 (b) A single source, political committee, or political party shall not

7 contribute more to a candidate, political committee, or political party than the

8 candidate, political committee, or political party is permitted to accept under

9 this section.

10 (c)(1)(A) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, only an  
11 individual, a political committee, or a political party may make a contribution  
12 to a candidate or to a political party.

13 (B) In accordance with the provisions of subdivision (A) of this  
14 subdivision (1), an individual may make a contribution as follows, which in  
15 either case shall be considered a contribution from the individual:

16 (i) in the individual's capacity as an unincorporated sole  
17 proprietorship; or

18 (ii) from his or her revocable trust, if the individual is a named  
19 trustee.

1           (2) A candidate or a political party shall not accept a contribution from  
2           any person other than those permitted to make such a contribution under  
3           subdivision (1) of this subsection.

4           (d) As used in this section:

5           (1) For a candidate described in subdivisions (a)(1)-(3) of this section,  
6           an “election cycle” means:

7                   (A) in the case of a general or local election, the period that begins 38  
8           days after the previous general or local election for the office and ends 38 days  
9           after the general or local election for the office for which that person is a  
10          candidate, and includes any primary or ~~run-off~~ runoff election related to that  
11          general or local election; or

12                   (B) in the case of a special election, the period that begins on the date  
13          the special election for the office was ordered and ends 38 days after that  
14          special election, and includes any special primary or ~~run-off~~ runoff election  
15          related to that special election.

16           (2) For a political committee, political party, or single source described  
17          in subdivisions (4)–(6) of subsection (a), an “election cycle” means a two-year  
18          general election cycle.

19          Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

20           This act shall take effect on December 11, 2020.

1 and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating  
2 to the persons authorized to make contributions to candidates and political  
3 parties and to political committee names”

4

5

6

7

8

9 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

10

\_\_\_\_\_

11

Senator \_\_\_\_\_

12

FOR THE COMMITTEE