

SENATE No. 2801

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

SENATE, May 30, 2024.

The committee on Election Laws, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2511) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Julian Cyr, Dylan A. Fernandes and Susan L. Moran for legislation relative to dark money in local government; and (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Dylan A. Fernandes and Julian Cyr relative to disclosure and regulation of campaign expenditures and contributions for certain town meeting articles, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2801).

For the committee,
John F. Keenan

SENATE No. 2801

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to dark money in local government.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 55 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 22A the following section:-

3 “SECTION 22B: Persons or corporations making contributions or expenditures to
4 influence town warrant articles; filing reports with clerk; penalties.

5 (a) Terms used in this section shall be construed as follows unless a contrary intention
6 clearly appears:-

7 “Article”, subjects to be acted upon at a town meeting as referenced in a warrant.

8 “Town Meeting”, an annual town meeting or special town meeting called pursuant to
9 chapter 39, section .9

10 “Warrant”, the call of a town meeting pursuant to chapter 39, section 10.

11 (b) Any person, corporation, association, organization or other group of persons, which
12 has given, paid, or expended, or promised to give, pay or expend, any money or other thing of

13 value of \$1,000 or more in the aggregate in order to influence or affect an article on a warrant or
14 the vote on any article at a town meeting, shall file reports on a form as prescribed by the
15 director. The form shall include the date each expenditure was made or liability incurred; the
16 purpose of the expenditure or liability; the amount of the expenditure; the full name and address
17 of the person to whom each expenditure was made or liability incurred; the full name and
18 address of the person, corporation, association, organization or the members of other group of
19 persons by whom such expenditure was made or liability incurred; and for each gift, payment or
20 contribution received to make the expenditure or incur the liability (1) the date of receipt; (2) the
21 amount; and (3) the full name and address from whom each gift, payment or contribution was
22 received.

23 (c) Such reports shall be filed with the town clerk as follows: (i) on the fifth day of each
24 month for any contributions received or expenditures made in the preceding month through the
25 last day of the preceding month; (ii) on the fifth day preceding a town meeting complete as to the
26 seventh day preceding the town meeting; and (iii) as a final report, on the thirtieth day following
27 a town meeting.

28 (d) This section shall not prohibit any officer, employee or agent of the commonwealth or
29 its subdivisions from acting in their official capacity or private capacity relative to an article on a
30 warrant.

31 (e) Violation of any provision of this section shall be punished by imprisonment for not
32 more than one year, or by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both.