

SENATE No. 2916

Senate, January 15, 2026 -- Text of the Senate Bill improving campaign finance reporting for statewide ballot questions (Senate, No. 2916) (being the text of Senate, No. 2898, printed as amended)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act improving campaign finance reporting for statewide ballot questions.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to improve campaign finance reporting by statewide ballot question committees, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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. Section 22A of chapter 53 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

3 Blank forms provided for the collection of signatures for an initiative petition or
4 referendum petition, which will be circulated by a person receiving compensation for the
5 collection of signatures, shall include a disclosure, in a manner to be determined by the state
6 secretary, which clearly informs potential signatories that the form is being distributed by a paid
7 signature gatherer.

8 SECTION 2. Said chapter 53 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 22A
9 the following section:-

10 Section 22A1/2. No person shall provide anything of value contingent upon the number
11 of signatures collected for a statewide initiative petition or referendum petition, including, but
12 not limited to, payments on a fee-per-signature basis; provided, however, that the payment of
13 incentive bonuses for obtaining a certain number of signatures shall be prohibited.

14 A violation of this section shall be punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more
15 than \$10,000; provided, however, that each signature collected in violation of this section shall
16 be a separate offense.

17 SECTION 3. Section 1 of chapter 55 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024
18 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

19 For the purpose of this chapter, supporting, favoring, promoting or opposing a question
20 submitted to the voters shall include actions to place or oppose placing a question on a statewide
21 election ballot; provided, however, that supporting, favoring, promoting or opposing a question
22 to be submitted to the voters shall not include legislative lobbying as defined in section 39 of
23 chapter 3. The director shall adopt regulations to define actions for the purposes of this
24 paragraph, including the extent to which these actions include polling, research, legal, consulting
25 or other related services; provided, however, that contributions or expenditures for such actions
26 need not be disclosed as provided for in this chapter until such time as petitions in support of a
27 statewide ballot question are made available by the state secretary pursuant to section 22A of
28 chapter 53.

29 SECTION 4. Clause (4) of subsection (a) of section 18 of said chapter 55, as so
30 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 60 to 64, inclusive, the words “,
31 independent expenditure PACs organized pursuant to section 18A and political committees

32 organized under the provisions of section 5 to favor or oppose a question submitted to the voters,
33 if the question appears on the ballot at the state election” and inserting in place thereof the
34 following words:- and independent expenditure PACs organized pursuant to section 18A.

35 SECTION 5. Said subsection (a) of said section 18 of said chapter 55, as so appearing, is
36 hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 12 and 13, the words “appears on ballots at a
37 state election” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- is a statewide ballot question.

38 SECTION 6. Said subsection (a) of said section 18 of said chapter 55, as so appearing, is
39 hereby further amended by striking out clause (5).

40 SECTION 7. Subsection (a) of section 19 of said chapter 55, as so appearing, is hereby
41 amended by inserting after the word “candidates”, in line 7, the following words:- , the treasurer
42 of each statewide ballot question committee,.

43 SECTION 8. Paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of said section 19 of said chapter 55, as so
44 appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- In addition, the treasurer of a
45 statewide ballot question committee shall also include the following information: (i) a list of all
46 in-kind contributions of more than \$50 received as of the last day of the preceding month and
47 since the last statement, including an alphabetical list of names and addresses of each person
48 making such in-kind contribution, the date received, the type of in-kind contribution and the
49 value of the in-kind contribution; and (ii) a list of new liabilities incurred as of the last day of the
50 preceding month, including the name and address of the person to whom the liability exists,
51 together with a clear statement of purpose for which the liability was incurred.

52 SECTION 9. Subsection (f) of said section 19 of said chapter 55, as so appearing, is
53 hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- The treasurer of a statewide ballot question

54 committee required to designate a depository under this section that receives a contribution of
55 not less than \$500 after the eighteenth day but not less than 72 hours before the date of an
56 election in which a question favored or opposed by the committee is on the ballot shall file a
57 report to disclose the information required under this section within 72 hours of depositing the
58 contribution.

59 SECTION 10. Section 22 of said chapter 55, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
60 striking out the third paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

61 If the question is a statewide ballot question, the report shall be filed with the director as
62 follows: (1) by the fifth day of each month covering the preceding month until the sixtieth day
63 before the election; (2) on or before the fifth and twentieth day of each month, complete as of the
64 preceding first and fifteenth day of the month, from the sixtieth day before the election until the
65 election; (3) November 20 following the election, complete as of the fifteenth day of the month;
66 and (4) January 20 of each year, complete as of December 31 of the prior year, until all declared
67 liabilities of that person or corporation, association, organization or other group of persons have
68 been discharged.

69 SECTION 11. The treasurer of a statewide ballot question committee shall include in the
70 first report filed with the director of campaign and political finance following the effective date
71 of this act all information required to be reported under chapter 55 of the General Laws dated
72 since the closing date of the last previous report; provided, however, that if there was no previous
73 report by the committee, the treasurer shall include in said first report all such information dated
74 since January 1, 2026.

75 SECTION 12. Sections 1 to 105, inclusive, shall take effect 30 days after the effective
76 date of this act.