

# Government Oversight Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1405

AN ACT MODIFYING CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS AND THE POWERS OF

**Title:** THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION.

**Vote Date:** 3/18/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/6/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Oversight Committee  
Senator Sampson

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Section 1 clarifies the definition of organizational expenditure by allowing de minimis activity of electronically sharing, posting, and forwarding content generated by a candidate committee or by another committee on behalf of a candidate. This section also exempts the sharing of fundraising links by town committees, leadership PAC's, and state parties from the prohibition on solicitation.

Section 2 adds texting to the statute for political advertising and clarifies that the appearance of a disclaimer in an initial message or hyperlink within the body of the text message to a website where the disclaimer appears satisfies the disclaimer requirement. This section also removes the treasurer's name from committee disclaimers.

Section 3 repeals the audio messaging requirement for video broadcasts.

Section 4 reduces the number of random audits conducted by SEEC from 50% to 20% of candidate committees.

Section 5 prohibits SEEC from issuing rulings or formal advisory opinions affecting the CEP program within 180 days preceding a general election.

Section 6 requires SEEC to submit any new or revised guidance documents related to campaign financing or the CEP program, to the Government Oversight Committee, for a public hearing within 30 days of being submitted. The Government Oversight Committee may

reject the guidance document by a majority vote. The guidance document is deemed approved if the committee takes no action within 30 days.

Section 7 requires maximum contribution limits to be published by December 30th of odd numbered years. Maximum limits are also prohibited from being lower than the previous published limit.

Section 8 requires SEEC to provide reason to a committee's treasurer when a contribution is rejected and return the rejected contributions to the original contributor. This section also prohibits a contribution from being disqualified if the residential address associated with the contribution does not match the billing address, or if the contribution was made in response to an electronically shared link to a fundraising. Additionally, information on a contribution form is required to be presumed valid and may not be invalidated by SEEC using information on the form unless SEEC is able to prove its disqualification based on the result of a prior investigative finding.

Section 9 requires SEEC to follow the same rules as the state legislature for the broadcast of their meetings.

Section 10 raises thresholds for the cost of campaign events put on by one or more individuals to exempt the event from being counted as a contribution.

Sec 11 raises thresholds for the cost of campaign events put on by one or more individuals to exempt the event from being counted as an expenditure.

#### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

##### **Joshua Foley: Staff Attorney, CT State Elections Enforcement Commission:**

Mr. Foley opposes this bill because it will do damage to SEEC's operation by reducing its oversight when it comes to candidates using a CEP grant, undermine campaign finance laws and how CEP grant funds are spent and monitored.

##### **Shannon Kief: Legal Program Director, CT State Elections Enforcement Commission:**

Supports only lines 278-331

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

##### **Susan Bradford: Resident/Citizen:**

Supports this bill as she believes it would make many positive changes.

##### **Linda Dalessio, Doctor:**

Generic Support of bill.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Cheri Quickmire: Executive Director, Common Cause CT:**

**Alex Knopp, Former GAE Co-chair, Common Cause CT board member:**

Opposes this bill because it could undermine the Joint Rules regarding assigning jurisdiction over SEEC and its related areas of policy and procedure, as well as undermining the independence of SEEC by removing its internal oversight/administrative capacity to the CGA.

**Pamela Klem: Campaign Finance Specialist, CT League of Women Voters:**

Opposes this bill because it could weaken and restrict the power of SEEC to conduct effective audits which would reduce public transparency and undermine the organization.

**Reported by: Greg Wolff, Griffin Olshan**

**Date: 3/20/25**