

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2080

By Delegates Kump, Hillenbrand, and Ridenour

[Introduced February 12, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §3-8-12 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 prohibiting the use of school resources in election advocacy efforts; and prohibiting school
3 employees from political activity during hours or on behalf of the school administration.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 8. REGULATION AND CONTROL OF ELECTIONS.

§3-8-12. Additional acts forbidden; circulation of written matter; newspaper advertising; solicitation of contributions; intimidation and coercion of employees; promise of employment or other benefits; limitations on contributions; public contractors; penalty.

1 (a) A person may not publish, issue, or circulate, or cause to be published, issued, or
2 circulated, any anonymous letter, circular, placard, radio or television advertisement, or other
3 publication supporting or aiding the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate.

4 (b) An owner, publisher, editor, or employee of a newspaper or other periodical may not
5 insert, either in its advertising or reading columns, any matter, paid for or to be paid for, which
6 tends to influence the voting at any election, unless directly designating it as a paid advertisement
7 and stating the name of the person authorizing its publication and the candidate in whose behalf it
8 is published.

9 (c) A person may not, in any room or building occupied for the discharge of official duties by
10 any officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision of the state, solicit orally or by written
11 communication delivered within the room or building, or in any other manner, any contribution of
12 money or other thing of value for any party or political purpose, from any postmaster or any other
13 officer or employee of the federal government, or officer or employee of the state, or a political
14 subdivision of the state. An officer, agent, clerk, or employee of the federal government, or of this
15 state, or any political subdivision of the state, who may have charge or control of any building,
16 office, or room, occupied for any official purpose, may not knowingly permit any person to enter
17 any building, office, or room, occupied for any official purpose, for the purpose of soliciting or

18 receiving any political assessments from, or delivering or giving written solicitations for, or any
19 notice of, any political assessments to, any officer or employee of the state, or a political
20 subdivision of the state.

21 (d) Except as provided in §3-8-8 of this code, a person entering into any contract with the
22 state or its subdivisions, or any department or agency of the state, either for rendition of personal
23 services or furnishing any material, supplies, or equipment or selling any land or building to the
24 state, or its subdivisions, or any department or agency of the state, if payment for the performance
25 of the contract or payment for the material, supplies, equipment, land, or building is to be made, in
26 whole or in part, from public funds may not, during the period of negotiation for or performance
27 under the contract or furnishing of materials, supplies, equipment, land, or buildings, directly or
28 indirectly, make any contribution to any political party, committee, or candidate for public office, or
29 to any person for political purposes or use nor may any person or firm solicit any contributions for
30 any purpose during any period.

31 (e) A person may not, directly or indirectly, promise any employment, position, work,
32 compensation, or other benefit provided for, or made possible, in whole or in part, by act of the
33 Legislature, to any person as consideration, favor or reward for any political activity for the support
34 of or opposition to any candidate, or any political party in any election.

35 (f) A person may not, directly or indirectly, make any contribution in excess of the amounts
36 permitted by §3-8-5c of this code, in connection with any campaign for nomination or election to or
37 on behalf of any statewide office, in connection with any other campaign for nomination or election
38 to or on behalf of any other elective office in the state or any of its subdivisions, or in connection
39 with or on behalf of any person engaged in furthering, advancing, supporting, or aiding the
40 nomination or election of any candidate for any of the offices.

41 (g) It is unlawful for any person to create, establish, or organize more than one political
42 committee with the intent to avoid or evade the contribution limitations contained in this article.

43 (h) A person may not, directly or indirectly, make contributions to a state party executive

committee or caucus campaign committee which, in the aggregate, are in excess of the amounts permitted by §3-8-5c of this code in any calendar year.

(i) The limitations on contributions contained in this section do not apply to transfers among a state party executive committee, a caucus campaign committee, and a national committee of the same political party: *Provided*, That the moneys transferred may only be used for voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities of the state committees.

(j) A person may not solicit any contribution, other than contributions to a campaign for or against a county or local government ballot issue, from any nonelective salaried employee of the state government or of any of its subdivisions: *Provided*, That in no event may any person acting in a supervisory role solicit a person who is a subordinate employee for any contribution. A person may not coerce or intimidate any nonelective salaried employee into making a contribution. A person may not coerce or intimidate any nonsalaried employee of the state government or any of its subdivisions into engaging in or refraining from any form of political activity. The provisions of this subsection may not be construed to prevent any employee from making a contribution or from engaging in political activity voluntarily without coercion, intimidation, or solicitation.

(k) A person may not solicit a contribution from any other person without informing the other person at the time of the solicitation of the amount of any commission, remuneration, or other compensation that the solicitor or any other person will receive or expect to receive as a direct result of the contribution being successfully collected. Nothing in this subsection may be construed to apply to solicitations of contributions made by any person serving as an unpaid volunteer.

(l) A person may not place any letter, circular, flyer, advertisement, election paraphernalia, solicitation material or other printed or published item tending to influence voting at any election in a roadside receptacle unless it is: (1) Approved for placement into a roadside receptacle by the business or entity owning the receptacle; and (2) contains a written acknowledgment of the approval. This subdivision does not apply to any printed material contained in a newspaper or periodical published or distributed by the owner of the receptacle. The term "roadside receptacle"

means any container placed by a newspaper or periodical business or entity to facilitate home or personal delivery of a designated newspaper or periodical to its customers.

(m) A person who is employed in a public school in this state is prohibited from the use of school resources in election advocacy efforts.

(n) A person who is employed in a public school in this state is prohibited from political activity during his or her work hours.

(o) A person who is employed in a public school in this state is prohibited from engaging in political activity on behalf of the school administration.

~~(m)~~ (p) Any person violating any provision of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or confined in jail for not more than one year, or both fined and confined.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the use of school resources in election advocacy efforts. The bill also prohibits school employees from political activity during work hours or engaging in such activity on behalf of the school administration.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.