

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 640

By Senators Azinger, Charnock, Helton, and Z.

Maynard

[Introduced January 28, 2026; referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §3-8-5a and §3-8-11 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as
2 amended; and to amend the code by adding a new section, designated §3-8-6a, relating to
3 prohibiting the release of addresses and names of employers of persons who make
4 contributions to political elections; and providing a misdemeanor criminal penalty.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 8. REGULATION AND CONTROL OF ELECTIONS.

§3-8-5a. Information required in financial statement.

1 (a) Each financial statement required by the provisions of this article, other than a
2 disclosure of electioneering communications pursuant to §3-8-2b of this article, shall contain only
3 the following information:

4 (1) The name, residence and mailing address and telephone number of each candidate,
5 financial agent, treasurer or person and the name, address and telephone number of each
6 association, organization or committee filing a financial statement.

7 (2) The balance of cash and any other sum of money on hand at the beginning and the end
8 of the period covered by the financial statement.

9 (3) The name of any person making a contribution and the amount of the contribution. If the
10 total contributions of any one person in any one election cycle amount to more than \$250, the
11 residence and mailing address of the contributor and, if the contributor is an individual, his or her
12 major business affiliation and occupation shall also be reported. A contribution totaling more than
13 \$50 of currency of the United States or currency of any foreign country by any one contributor is
14 prohibited and a violation of §3-8-5d of this article. ~~The statement on which contributions are~~
15 ~~required to be reported by this subdivision may not distinguish between contributions made by~~
16 ~~individuals and contributions made by partnerships, firms, associations, committees,~~
17 ~~organizations or groups.~~

18 (4) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial
19 statement.

(5) The name, residence and mailing address of any individual or the name and mailing address of each lending institution making a loan or of the spouse cosigning a loan, as appropriate, the amount of any loan received, the date and terms of the loan, including the interest and repayment schedule, and a copy of the loan agreement.

(6) The name, residence and mailing address of any individual or the name and mailing address of each partnership, firm, association, committee, organization or group having previously made or cosigned a loan for which payment is made or a balance is outstanding at the end of the period, together with the amount of repayment on the loan made during the period and the balance at the end of the period.

(7) The total outstanding balance of all loans at the end of the period.

(8) The name, residence and mailing address of any person to whom each expenditure was made or liability incurred, including expenditures made on behalf of a candidate or political committee that otherwise are not made directly by the candidate or political committee, together with the amount and purpose of each expenditure or liability incurred and the date of each transaction.

(9) The total expenditure for the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate or any person supporting, aiding or opposing the nomination, election or defeat of any candidate in whose behalf an expenditure was made or a contribution was given for the primary or other election.

(10) The total amount of expenditures made during the period covered by the financial statement.

(b) Any unexpended balance at the time of making the financial statements herein provided for shall be properly accounted for in that financial statement and shall appear as a beginning balance in the next financial statement.

(c) Each financial statement required by this section shall contain a separate section setting forth the following information for each fund-raising event held during the period covered by the financial statement:

(1) The type of event, date held and address and name, if any, of the place where the event was held.

(2) All of the information required by subdivision (3), subsection (a) of this section.

(3) The total of all moneys received at the fund-raising event.

(4) The expenditures incident to the fund-raising event.

(5) The net receipts of the fund-raising event.

(d) When any lump sum payment is made to any advertising agency or other disbursing person who does not file a report of detailed accounts and verified financial statements as required in this section, such lump sum expenditures shall be accounted for in the same manner as provided for herein.

(e) Any contribution or expenditure made by or on behalf of a candidate for public office, to any other candidate or committee for a candidate for any public office in the same election shall be accounted for in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(f) No person may make any contribution except from his, her or its own funds, unless such person discloses in writing to the person required to report under this section the name, residence, mailing address, major business affiliation and occupation of the person which furnished the funds to the contributor. All such disclosures shall be included in the statement required by this section.

(g) Any firm, association, committee or fund permitted by section eight of this article to be a political committee shall disclose on the financial statement its corporate or other affiliation.

(h) No contribution may be made, directly or indirectly, in a fictitious name, anonymously or by one person through an agent, relative or other person so as to conceal the identity of the source of the contribution or in any other manner so as to effect concealment of the contributor's identity.

(i) No person may accept any contribution for the purpose of influencing the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate or for the passage or defeat of any ballot issue unless the identity of the donor and the amount of the contribution is known and reported.

(j) When any person receives an anonymous contribution which cannot be returned

because the donor cannot be identified, that contribution shall be donated to the General Revenue Fund of the state. Any anonymous contribution shall be recorded as such on the candidate's financial statement, but may not be expended for election expenses. At the time of filing, the financial statement shall include a statement of distribution of anonymous contributions, which total amount shall equal the total of all anonymous contributions received during the period.

(k) Any membership organization which raises funds for political purposes by payroll deduction, assessing them as part of its membership dues or as a separate assessment, may report the amount raised as follows:

(1) If the portion of dues or assessments designated for political purposes equals \$25 or less per member over the course of a calendar year, the total amount raised for political purposes through membership dues or assessments during the period is reported by showing the amount required to be paid by each member and the number of members.

(2) If the total payroll deduction for political purposes of each participating member equals \$25 or less over the course of a calendar or fiscal year, as specified by the organization, the organization shall report the total amount received for political purposes through payroll deductions during the reporting period and, to the maximum extent possible, the amount of each yearly payroll deduction contribution level and the number of members contributing at each such specified level. The membership organization shall maintain records of the name and yearly payroll deduction amounts of each participating member.

(3) If any member contributes to the membership organization through individual voluntary contributions by means other than payroll deduction, membership dues, or assessments as provided in this subsection, the reporting requirements of subdivision (3), subsection (a) of this section shall apply. Funds raised for political purposes must be segregated from the funds for other purposes and listed in its report.

(l) Notwithstanding the provisions of section five of this article or of the provisions of this section to the contrary, an alternative reporting procedure may be followed by a political party

committee in filing financial reports for fund-raising events if the total profit does not exceed \$5,000 per year. A political party committee may report gross receipts for the sale of food, beverages, services, novelty items, raffle tickets or memorabilia, except that any receipt of more than \$50 from an individual or organization shall be reported as a contribution. A political party committee using this alternative method of reporting shall report:

- (i) The name of the committee;
- (ii) The type of fund-raising activity undertaken;
- (iii) The location where the activity occurred;
- (iv) The date of the fundraiser;
- (v) The name of any individual who contributed more than \$50 worth of items to be sold;
- (vi) The name and amount received from any person or organization purchasing more than \$50 worth of food, beverages, services, novelty items, raffle tickets or memorabilia;
- (vii) The gross receipts of the fundraiser; and
- (viii) The date, amount, purpose and name and address of each person or organization from whom items with a fair market value of more than \$50 were purchased for resale.

§3-8-6a. Financial statement forms; filing; disposition.

For each financial statement required by the provisions of this article, the following information may not be made publicly available in any manner, including but not limited to disclosure on any governmental websites or in response to public records requests under the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act, §29B-1-1 et. seq., of this code or its successor laws: (1) the street number and street name in the residence and mailing address of any individual who makes a contribution, or who makes or cosigns a loan; and (2) the major business affiliation, employer, and/or business of such individual.

§3-8-11. Specific acts forbidden; penalties.

(a) Any person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his or her behalf, ~~make~~ makes use of, or ~~threaten~~ threatens to make use of, any force, violence or

3 restraint, or inflict, or ~~threaten~~ threatens to inflict, any damage, harm or loss, upon or against any
4 person, or by any other means attempt to intimidate or exert any undue influence, in order to
5 induce ~~such~~ that person to vote or refrain from voting, or on account of ~~such~~ that person having
6 voted or refrained from voting, at any election, or who ~~shall~~, by abduction, duress or any fraudulent
7 device or contrivance, ~~impede or prevent~~ impedes or prevents the free exercise of the suffrage by
8 any elector, or ~~shall~~ thereby ~~compel, induce or prevail~~ compels, induces or prevails upon any
9 elector either to vote or refrain from voting for or against any particular candidate or measure; or

10 (b) Any person who, being an employer, or acting for or on behalf of any employer, ~~shall~~
11 give gives any notice or information to his or her employees, containing any threat, either express
12 or implied, intended or calculated to influence the political view or actions of the workmen or
13 employees; or

14 (c) Any person who ~~shall~~, knowingly, ~~make or publish, or cause~~ makes or publishes, or
15 causes to be made or published, any false statement in regard to any candidate, which statement
16 is intended or tends to affect any voting at any election whatever; or

17 (d) Any person who ~~shall pay~~ pays any owner, publisher, editor or employee or any
18 newspaper or other periodical, to advocate or oppose editorially, any candidate for nomination or
19 election, or any political party, or any measure to be submitted to the vote of the people; or any
20 owner, publisher, editor or employee, who ~~shall solicit or accept~~ solicits or accepts ~~such~~ the
21 ~~payment: ~~is~~ is~~ guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than
22 \$10,000, or confined in jail for not more than one year, or, in the discretion of the court, shall be
23 subject to both such fine and imprisonment.

24 (e) Any contributor whose address, major business affiliation, employer, or business
25 information is disclosed to the public in violation of §3-8-6a of this code may recover a civil penalty
26 in the amount of \$1,000 from the responsible agency for each report on which that information is
27 publicly disclosed. In addition, any state or local officer or employee who knowingly discloses to
28 the public a contributor's address, major business affiliation, employer, and/or business

- 29 information in violation of §3-8-6a of this code is guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction
30 thereof, shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or, be confined in jail for not more than one year.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the release of addresses and names of employers of persons who make contributions to political elections and providing misdemeanor criminal penalty.

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