

## **CS/CS/HB 1207 — Campaign Financing**

by Economic Development and Community Affairs Policy Council; Governmental Affairs Policy Committee; and Rep. McKeel (CS/SB 880 by Ethics and Elections Committee and Senators Alexander and Haridopolis)

This bill reenacts and amends provisions related to electioneering communications and electioneering communication organizations (“ECOs”) to do the following:

- Redefine “electioneering communication” by removing references to issue elections and the number of persons in a geographic area who must be “targeted,” specifying the distribution media subject to regulation, regulating advocacy that is the functional equivalent of express advocacy, and providing limited timeframes for when communications can be regulated.
- Redefine “electioneering communications organization” to clarify that it includes only those organizations with “election-related activities” that are limited to electioneering communications and that its activities would not require the group to register as a political party, political committee, or committee of continuous existence.
- Require an organization to register as an ECO upon receipt or expenditure of an aggregate amount exceeding \$5,000.
- Increase the amount an *individual* can expend before being subject to electioneering (and independent expenditure) disclosure requirements from \$100 to \$5,000, to conform.
- Remove prohibitions against an ECO accepting contributions from certain 527 and 501(c)(4) organizations, and restrictions against ECOs using contributions received proximate to an election.
- Move the registration and reporting requirements for ECOs from a definitional section to the substantive provisions of Chapter 106.

Also, the bill authorizes the “leader” of each political party conference of the state Senate and House of Representatives to establish a separate, affiliated party committee (“APC”) to support the election of candidates of the leader's political party. “Leader” means the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority leader of either house of the Legislature, until a person is designated by a political party conference of members of either house to succeed to the position --- at which time the designee becomes the leader for purposes of the APC. The appropriate APC receives the two-percent party assessment for its State Senate and House candidates who pay a qualifying fee to run for office, provided the APC agrees to abide by contribution limits and not make certain independent expenditures. The bill provides that specified requirements and exemptions for political parties and state executive committees also apply to an APC. Finally, the bill removes the 28-day time limitation prior to a general election for contributions from political parties and APCs to candidates.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2010.

*Vote: Senate 25-11; House 73-42*