

California Fair Political Practices Commission

California State Contribution Limits

(Effective January 1, 2015 - December 31, 2016)

Candidates seeking a state office and committees that make contributions to state candidates are subject to contribution limits from a single source. (Sections 85301 - 85303.) Contributions from affiliated entities are aggregated for purposes of the limits. (Regulation 18215.1.) The chart below shows the current limits per contributor for state offices. The primary, general, special, and special run-off elections are considered separate elections. Contribution limits to candidates apply to each election. Contribution limits to officeholder and other committees apply on a calendar year basis. Contact your city or county about contribution limits for local offices.

Contribution Limits to State Candidates Per Election

Candidate or Officeholder	Contributor Sources		
	Person (individual, business entity, committee/PAC)	Small Contributor Committee (see definition on page 2)	Political Party
Senate and Assembly	\$4,200	\$8,500	No Limit
CalPERS/CalSTRS	\$4,200	\$8,500	No Limit
Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Controller, Supt. of Public Instruction, Insurance Commissioner, and Board of Equalization	\$7,000	\$14,100	No Limit
Governor	\$28,200	\$28,200	No Limit

Contributions to Other State Committees Per Calendar Year

Committee	Contributor Sources	
	Person (individual, business entity, committee/PAC)	
Committee (Not Political Party) that Contributes to State Candidates (PAC)	\$7,000	
Political Party Account for State Candidates	\$35,200	
Small Contributor Committee	\$200	
Committee Account NOT for State Candidates (Ballot Measure, PAC, Political Party)	No Limit*	

*State committees (including political parties and PACs) may receive contributions in excess of the limits identified above as long as the contributions are NOT used for state candidate contributions. (Regulation 18534.)

Contributions to State Officeholder Committees Per Calendar Year

Committee	Contributor Sources	
	Any Source (Person, Small Contributor Committee or Political Party)	Aggregate From All Sources
Senate and Assembly	\$3,500	\$58,500
CalPERS/CalSTRS	\$3,500	\$58,500
Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Controller, Supt. of Public Instruction, Insurance Commissioner, and Board of Equalization	\$5,900	\$117,100
Governor	\$23,400	\$234,200

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The contribution limits are effective for elections held between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2016. These limits do not apply to contributions made to elections in previous years. Such contributions are subject to the limits in place for that year - see previous charts.

Legal Defense Funds

Contributions raised for a legal defense fund are not subject to contribution limits or the voluntary expenditure ceiling. However, a candidate or officeholder may raise, in total, no more than is reasonably necessary to cover attorney's fees and other legal costs related to the proceeding for which the fund is created. (Section 85304; Regulation 18530.4.)

Recall Elections

A state officeholder who is the subject of a recall may set up a separate committee to oppose the qualification of the recall measure and, if the recall petition qualifies, the recall election. Neither contribution limits nor voluntary expenditure ceilings apply to the committee to oppose the recall that is controlled by the officeholder who is the target of the recall attempt. Candidates running to replace an officeholder who is the target of a recall are subject to the contribution limits and the expenditure limits applicable to the election for that office. (Section 85315; Regulation 18531.5.)

Ballot Measure Committees

Contributions to ballot measure committees controlled by a candidate for elective state office are not limited.

Contributions from State Candidates and Officeholders

A state candidate or state officeholder may not contribute more than \$4,200 to a committee controlled by another state candidate or state officeholder (including a state or local election committee, legal defense fund, officeholder account, recall committee, or ballot measure committee). This limit applies on a per election basis and includes, in the aggregate, contributions made from the candidate's or officeholder's personal funds and from campaign funds. (Section 85305; Regulation 18535.)

Communications Identifying State Candidates

Any committee that makes a payment or a promise of payment totaling \$50,000 or more for a communication that:

1. Clearly identifies a state candidate; but
2. Does not expressly advocate the election or defeat of the candidate; and
3. Is disseminated, broadcast, or otherwise published within 45 days of an election, may not receive a contribution from any single source of more than \$35,200 in a calendar

year if the communication is made at the behest of the candidate featured in the communication. (Section 85310.)

Officeholder Committees

Officeholder contributions must be cumulated (in full) with any other contributions from the same contributor(s) for any other future elective state office for which the officeholder maintains a controlled committee during the term of office in which the contribution is received. Contributions to candidates for future elections and to their officeholder account are cumulated for purposes of contribution limits. (Regulation 18531.62.)

Contributions from State Lobbyists

A state lobbyist may not contribute to a state officeholder's or candidate's committee if the lobbyist is registered to lobby the agency of the elected officer or the agency to which the candidate is seeking election. The lobbyist also may not contribute to a local committee controlled by any such state candidate. (Section 85702; Regulation 18572.) In addition, effective January 1, 2015, lobbyists and lobbying firms may no longer take advantage of the \$500 or less home/office fundraiser exception that is available to other individuals and entities. (SB 1441 (Lara) – Chapter 930, Stats. of 2014; AB 1673 (Garcia) – Chapter 882, Stats. of 2014.)

Local Elections

Many cities and counties have local contribution limits and other election rules. "Local Campaign Ordinances" are listed on the FPPC's website. Check with your city or county about contribution limits for local elections.

Definitions

Person: An individual, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, syndicate, business trust, company, corporation, limited liability company, association, committee, and any other organization or group of persons acting in concert. (Section 82047.)

Small Contributor Committee: Any committee that meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) The committee has been in existence for at least six months.
- (b) The committee receives contributions from 100 or more persons.
- (c) No one person has contributed to the committee more than \$200 per calendar year.
- (d) The committee makes contributions to five or more candidates. (Section 85203; Regulation 18503.)

Political Party Committee: The state central committee or county central committee of an organization that meets the requirements for recognition as a political party under Elections Code Section 5100. (Section 85205.)