

SESSION OF 2025

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2054

As Further Amended by House Committee on
Elections

Brief*

HB 2054, as amended, would amend provisions in the Campaign Finance Act (Act) to increase limits on certain campaign contributions and eliminate limits on contributions to party committees.

The bill would be in effect upon publication in the *Kansas Register*.

Contributions to Party Committees

The bill would remove annual aggregate limits on contributions to party committees by persons and national party committees.

[*Note:* The Act defines “person” as any individual, committee, corporation, partnership, trust, organization, or association.]

Contributions to Campaigns

The bill would increase aggregate limits for each of the following campaigns for each primary and general election:

- For the pair of offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor or other statewide offices, from \$2,000 to \$4,000;

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- For the office of member of the House of Representatives, district judge, district attorney, or a candidate for local office, from \$500 to \$1,000; and
- For the office of state senator or member of the State Board of Education, from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

The bill would increase the amount any person may contribute to any candidate or candidate committee in cash for any primary or general election from \$100 to \$200.

The bill would state, for the purposes of this section, only payment or transfer of moneys by a party committee directly to a candidate or their committee constitutes a contribution. The bill would clarify no other expenditures made by a party committee in support of a candidate, with or without a candidate's cooperation or consent, are contributions for the purposes of the above-described contribution limits.

Applicability

The bill would apply the contribution limits to any person except the candidate or the candidate's spouse.

Receipt of Contributions

The bill would allow a candidate or their committee to accept a contribution for both the primary and general election prior to the date of the primary election if the candidate or their committee uses an acceptable accounting method to distinguish between which contributions are received for the primary election and which are for the general election.

The bill would provide examples of acceptable accounting methods, including the designation of separate accounts for each election or the establishment of separate books and records for each election. The bill would require the authorized records of a candidate or their committee show the cash on hand prior to the primary election was, at all times, equal to or greater than the amount of contributions received and designated for the general election minus any disbursements made for the general election.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Elections at the request of Representative Waggoner.

House Committee on Elections

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was presented by representatives of the Institute for Free Speech, Kriegshauser Law Group, and RFJ Consulting, LLC, and a professor from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. The proponents generally stated the current limits on candidate campaign contributions are low enough to risk constitutional challenges, and that there are no limits to the contributions a person can make to political action committees (PACs) and 501(c)(4) organizations, so removing limits to contributions a person can make to a party committee will strengthen the party committee's voice in general elections.

A professor from Washburn University School of Law presented neutral testimony, stating narrowly drawn limits on contributions to candidates are important tools for the prevention of *quid pro quo* corruption.

Written-only opponent testimony was submitted by a representative of Campaign Legal Center and five private citizens.

No other testimony was provided.

House Committee of the Whole

On February 19, 2025, the House Committee of the Whole amended the bill to limit party contributions to candidates in all primary elections and general elections. The Committee of the Whole then reconsidered the bill. The bill, as amended by the Committee of the Whole, was withdrawn from the calendar and referred to the House Committee on Calendar and Printing.

On February 20, 2025, the bill was withdrawn from the Committee on Calendar and Printing and rereferred to the House Committee on Elections.

House Committee on Elections

On February 25, 2025, the House Committee amended the bill to:

- Apply campaign contribution limits to all persons;
- Add a provision clarifying only payment or transfer of moneys by a party committee is a contribution;
- Add a provision clarifying no expenditures made by a party committee in support of a candidate are considered contributions for the purpose of contribution limits; and
- Add a provision allowing candidates to receive contributions for primary and general elections before the primary election date and provide for acceptable accounting methods to do so.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of Budget on the bill, as introduced, the Secretary of State indicates enactment of the bill would have minimal fiscal effect on the agency, and the agency would use existing resources to update training materials for local election offices and update education and promotional materials to the voting public. The Governmental Ethics Commission indicates enactment of the bill would not have a fiscal effect on the agency and any expenditures that would result from printing new materials to reflect the change in contribution limits could be absorbed within existing resources.

Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2026 Governor's Budget Report*.

Campaign Finance Act; campaign contributions; party committees