

SUBJECT: Requiring political entities to disclose for whom expenditures were made

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Smith, Bucy, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, Manuel, E.  
Morales, Swanson, Vo

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Ed Johnson (*Registered, but did not testify*: Alan Vera, Harris  
County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Kathy Haigler;  
Russell Hayter; Susan Stewart)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Katya Ehresman, Common  
Cause Texas)

BACKGROUND: Election Code sec. 254.031(a) specifies required information to be  
disclosed in political reports, including the name and office sought or held  
of each candidate or officeholder who benefits from a direct campaign  
expenditure made during the reporting period.

DIGEST: HB 2629 would amend Election Code sec. 254.031(a) to require political  
entities to report the name and office sought or held of each candidate or  
officeholder for whom a direct campaign expenditure was made to support  
or oppose during the reporting period, rather than requiring a report on  
who benefited from a campaign expenditure.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023 and would apply only to a  
report required to be filed on or after the effective date of the bill.

SUPPORTERS  
SAY: HB 2629 would improve transparency for political action committees  
(PACs) by requiring candidates, officeholders, and political parties to  
disclose the name of any candidate or officeholder for whom a direct  
campaign expenditure was made to support or oppose.

A direct campaign expenditure is a campaign expenditure made on a

candidate's behalf and without the prior consent or approval of that candidate. Candidates have no way of knowing the amount of money used against them as direct campaign expenditures. Currently, PACs are not required to report the beneficiaries of their oppositional direct campaign expenditures, nor are candidates who benefit from these expenditures. HB 2629 would address this issue and increase transparency by requiring this information to be included in political reports.

HB 2629 could be enforced through the Texas Ethics Commission.

CRITICS  
SAY:

HB 2629 could be difficult to enforce and could result in more investigations of PACs that may not provide disclosure of direct campaign expenditures.