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SENATE BILL NO. 1497

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 8, 2019

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 9.3 of Title 24.2 an article numbered 3.1, consisting of sections numbered 24.2-948.5 through 24.2-948.10, and by adding in Article 8 of Chapter 9.3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-953.6, relating to campaign finance; campaign contribution limits; civil penalty.*

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Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 9.3 of Title 24.2 an article numbered 3.1, consisting of sections numbered 24.2-948.5 through 24.2-948.10, and by adding in Article 8 of Chapter 9.3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-953.6 as follows:

*Article 3.1.**Contribution Limits.***§ 24.2-948.5. Definitions.**

For purposes of this article, unless the context requires a different meaning, "candidate" means the candidate, the candidate's treasurer, and the candidate's campaign committee. Any contribution to the candidate's treasurer or campaign committee shall be deemed a contribution to the candidate.

§ 24.2-948.6. Limits on contributions to candidates for statewide office and the General Assembly.

A. No person, other than a political party committee or political action committee, shall make any single contribution, or any combination of contributions, that exceeds \$2,500 to any one candidate for the General Assembly or \$5,000 to any one candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General in any single calendar year.

B. No political action committee shall make any single contribution, or any combination of contributions, that exceeds \$5,000 to any one candidate for the General Assembly or \$10,000 to any one candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General in any single calendar year.

C. No candidate shall solicit or accept contributions in excess of the limits set forth in this section.

D. The limits set forth in this section shall not apply to contributions by (i) the candidate to his own campaign; (ii) the candidate's spouse, child, parent, or sibling to his campaign; and (iii) a political party committee to the candidate.

E. The limits set forth in this section shall apply without regard to whether the candidate is opposed or unopposed in the election or nominating process.

F. Any contribution or portion thereof that is returned to the contributor within 60 days after receipt shall not be deemed to be a contribution for the purposes of applying the limits set forth in this section.

§ 24.2-948.7. Prohibition on indirect contributions.

For purposes of applying the contribution limits set forth in § 24.2-948.6, all direct or indirect contributions made by a person to benefit a candidate, including any contributions that are knowingly earmarked or otherwise directed through any other person, political committee, political party committee, or political action committee, shall be deemed to be contributions from such person to such candidate.

§ 24.2-948.8. Aggregation of contributions.

For purposes of applying the contribution limits set forth in § 24.2-948.6:

1. All contributions made by a person or political action committee whose contribution or expenditure activity is financed, maintained, or controlled by the same corporation, labor organization, association, or any other person, including a parent, subsidiary, branch, division, department, or local unit of such corporation, labor organization, association, or any other person, or by any group of such persons, shall be deemed to be made by the same person or political action committee; and

2. For entities not described in subdivision 1, two or more entities shall be deemed to be a single entity sharing the same contribution limit if the entities (i) share the majority of members on their boards of directors and share two or more officers, (ii) are owned or controlled by the same majority shareholder or shareholders, (iii) are in a parent-subsidiary relationship, or (iv) have bylaws stating that one organization has the power to control the other.

§ 24.2-948.9. Attribution and aggregation of family contributions.

For purposes of applying the contribution limits set forth in § 24.2-948.6:

1. Contributions by spouses shall be deemed to be separate contributions and shall be aggregated

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59 *per individual; and*

60 2. *Contributions by unemancipated children under 18 years of age shall be considered contributions*
61 *by their parents, and 50 percent of the contributions shall be attributed to each parent or, in the case of*
62 *a single custodial parent, the total amount shall be attributed to the parent.*

63 **§ 24.2-948.10. Restrictions on loans.**

64 *Any loan to a candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, or the General*
65 *Assembly shall be deemed to be a contribution from the maker and the guarantor of the loan and is*
66 *subject to the contribution limits set forth in § 24.2-948.6. A loan to a candidate or the candidate's*
67 *campaign committee must be by written agreement. The proceeds of a loan made to a candidate shall*
68 *not be subject to the contribution limits stated in § 24.2-948.6 if the loan is made by the candidate to*
69 *his own campaign committee or is made by a commercial lending institution in the regular course of*
70 *business and on the same terms ordinarily available to members of the public and is secured or*
71 *guaranteed only by the candidate.*

72 **§ 24.2-953.6. Violation of contribution limits; civil penalty.**

73 *Any candidate for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, or the General Assembly whose*
74 *campaign committee knowingly accepts, or any contributor who knowingly makes to such candidate,*
75 *contributions in excess of the limits imposed in Article 3.1 (§ 24.2-948.5 et seq.) shall be subject to a*
76 *civil penalty of up to two times the amount by which the contribution exceeds the limit. The State Board*
77 *shall assess and collect such civil penalties, which shall be payable to the State Treasurer for deposit to*
78 *the general fund.*