

# Massachusetts Raises Contribution Limits, Heightens Disclosure Requirements

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Last month, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed into law House Bill 4366, which boosts individual-contribution limits in Massachusetts and increases disclosure requirements for independent speakers.

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## Reporting

Effective August 1, Massachusetts political committees that make only independent expenditures must comply with stricter reporting deadlines. Previously, as the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance has noted, the reporting laws allowed these committees "to operate without disclosing all of their activity on a timely schedule." Under the new system, though, independent expenditure committees must report all expenditures made and contributions received within seven days after making an independent expenditure. Independent expenditures of more than \$250 made within ten days before an election trigger 24-hour reporting.

Non-political action committee (PAC) entities engaged in independent spending—for example, trade associations—are likewise required to file reports according to this timeline. On the heels of these statutory amendments, the state's Office of Campaign and Political Finance has also promulgated broader disclosure rules to govern non-PAC groups. Echoing the disclosure requirements for "multipurpose organizations" in California (See *Election Law News*, May 2014), the new regulations now oblige certain organizations that make independent expenditures, electioneering communications, or contributions, to disclose donors on a "last in, first out" basis. The Office will be holding a public hearing on this and other regulatory changes on September 22, 2014 (while the regulatory amendments

are already in force, they have not yet been issued as permanent regulations).

### **Disclaimers**

The statutory amendments also require speakers to include more disclaimer information on their advertisements. For independent expenditures and electioneering communications transmitted "through paid television, internet advertising or print advertising appearing larger than 15 square inches," the ad must list the five persons or entities that made the largest contributions of more than \$5,000 to the speaker during the previous twelve months. As interpreted by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, "[c]ontributions received by the entity for purposes other than the making of the advertisement are included." Each ad also must include a written statement directing viewers to the Office's official website.

### **Contribution Limits**

Effective this coming January, Massachusetts will also be doubling the individual-contribution limit. Currently, individuals can contribute no more than \$500 to a candidate, but the amendment will increase that limit to \$1,000 on January 1, 2015.