



Virginia Sunshine Bill ([SB853](#), [HB1551](#))



Campaign Advertisement, Independent Expenditures, Electioneering Communications, and Disclaimer Requirements.

Patrons: Senator Barbara Favola & Delegate Dan Helmer

KEY PROVISIONS

- **Broadens the disclaimer requirements for ads** purchased by any person, campaign committee, or political committee **that are independent expenditures** or that advocate for the passage or defeat of a referendum. In addition, it extends reporting requirements for independent expenditures to apply to non-profit groups. This disclosure is also required for advertisements targeting candidates running in a specific election.
- It covers **print media, television, radio or an online platform on candidate or referenda campaigns**. The bill defines the applicable timeframe to such expenditure to 30 days before a primary election or 60 days before a general or special election.
- It applies to 25 or more **telephone calls** within 90 days of a primary or 180 days of a general or special election and includes **in-kind goods and services**.
- **It maintains reporting requirements** to the State Board of Elections of such independent expenditures above \$1,000 for statewide election or \$200 for any other election and **sets deadlines** for reporting within 24 hours of expenditure or disclosure, whichever occurs first.
- It requires that **advertisements** in print media, television, and radio that constitute independent expenditures (i.e., not coordinated with campaigns) **disclose within the advertisements all sponsoring organizations, as well as the top three individual contributors**.

WHY VIRGINIA NEEDS THIS BILL:

- In recognition that campaign advertisements and other electioneering communications through independent expenditures can influence public opinion on candidate and referenda campaigns, the **Coalition for Integrity's 2020 S.W.A.M.P Index rated Virginia 46 out of 51 jurisdictions in terms of transparency and accountability.**
- In a 2021 survey, **88 percent of Virginians, irrespective of party, indicated that they support total public disclosure of campaign donations.** This is mirrored across the country where states like [Arizona](#), [Alaska](#), [Tennessee](#), and [North Dakota](#) are putting in place more reporting requirements on campaign contributions.
- Public reporting and disclosure **should discourage indirect efforts by wealthy and/or out-of-district organizations and/or individuals to "buy" electoral results** thus strengthening the views and voices of local voters.
- **Lax campaign finance rules in Virginia allow outside groups to influence elections without much disclosure.** In the 2021 election, [nearly \\$7 million in opaque outside spending financed attack ads against candidates.](#)



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