

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 590

BY REPRESENTATIVE SPELL

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

ELECTIONS: Provides relative to foreign funding for elections and election campaigns

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 18:1461.9, relative to funding of elections; to prohibit the use of certain funds
3 in conducting election administration or election campaigns; to provide for criminal
4 penalties; to provide for the return of prohibited funds; to provide for certain
5 definitions; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 18:1461.9 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §1461.9. Prohibition on use of certain funds in the conduct of election
9 administration or election campaigns; penalties

10 A. No funds, goods, or services donated by a foreign government or a
11 nongovernmental source shall be used to conduct elections unless provided for in this
12 Code and subject to restrictions provided by law.

13 B. No funds, goods, or services donated by a foreign government, foreign
14 entity, or noncitizen shall be used to advocate for or against any ballot proposition
15 or question, candidate, or political party, either directly or indirectly.

16 C.(1) Any foreign government, foreign entity, noncitizen, or
17 nongovernmental source who makes a donation prohibited by this Section shall,
18 upon conviction, be fined not more than twice the amount of such donation or
19 imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than five years, or both.

1 (2) Any person that accepts a donation from a foreign government or
2 nongovernmental source for the conduct of elections in violation of Subsection A of
3 this Section and that has actual knowledge that the donation violates this Section
4 shall return the donation to the foreign government or nongovernmental source.

5 (3) Any candidate, committee, or other person required to file reports
6 pursuant to Chapter 11 of this Title that accepts a donation or contribution from a
7 foreign government, foreign entity, or noncitizen in violation of Subsection B of this
8 Section and that has actual knowledge that the donation or contribution violates this
9 Section shall return the donation or contribution by the method provided in R.S.
10 18:1505.2(I)(7).

11 D. For purposes of this Section, the following definitions apply:

12 (1) "Directly or indirectly" means acting either alone or jointly with, through,
13 or on behalf of any other committee, organization, person, or entity.

14 (2) "Foreign entity" means:

15 (a) Any foreign political party.

16 (b) Any entity, such as a partnership, association, corporation, organization,
17 or other combination of persons, that is organized under the laws of, or has its
18 principal place of business in, a foreign country.

19 (c) Any United States entity, such as a partnership, association, corporation,
20 or organization, which is wholly, or majority owned by a foreign national, unless:

21 (i) Any contribution or expenditure it makes derives entirely from funds
22 generated by the United States entity's United States operations.

23 (ii) All decisions concerning the contribution or expenditures are made by
24 individuals who are United States citizens, except for setting overall budget amounts.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 590 Engrossed

2025 Regular Session

Spell

Abstract: Prohibits the use of foreign funds to conduct elections or election campaigns, subject to criminal penalties.

Proposed law prohibits the use of funds, goods, or services donated by a foreign government or nongovernmental source to conduct elections.

Proposed law prohibits the use of funds, goods, or services donated by a foreign government, foreign entity, or noncitizen to promote a ballot proposition or question, candidate, or political party, directly or indirectly.

Proposed law provides that any foreign government, foreign entity, noncitizen, or nongovernmental source that violates proposed law shall be fined not more than twice the amount of the donation, imprisoned for not more than five years with or without hard labor, or both.

Proposed law provides that any person that accepts a donation in violation of proposed law and that has actual knowledge that the donation violates proposed law shall return the donation.

Proposed law defines "directly or indirectly" and "foreign entity".

(Adds R.S. 18:1461.9)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to the original bill:

1. Impose criminal penalties on the foreign government, foreign entity, noncitizen, or nongovernmental source that makes a prohibited donation, rather than the recipient of the donation.
2. Require the person that receives a donation in violation of proposed law to return the donation if the person has actual knowledge that the donation violates proposed law.