

By: Kolkhorst

S.B. No. 710

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the making and acceptance of political contributions during a special legislative session; creating a criminal offense.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Section 253.034, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 253.034. RESTRICTIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS DURING AND FOLLOWING ~~[REGULAR]~~ LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

SECTION 2. Section 253.034, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (a-1) and amending Subsections (b) and (c) to read as follows:

(a-1) During the period beginning on the date a special legislative session convenes and continuing through the date of final adjournment of the special legislative session, a person may not knowingly make a political contribution to:

(1) a statewide officeholder;

(2) a member of the legislature; or

(3) a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a statewide officeholder or member of the legislature.

(b) A statewide officeholder, a member of the legislature, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a statewide officeholder or member of the legislature may not knowingly accept a political contribution, and shall refuse a

1 political contribution that is received, during an applicable ~~[the]~~
 2 period prescribed by Subsection (a) or (a-1). A political
 3 contribution that is received and refused during that period shall
 4 be returned to the contributor not later than the 30th day after the
 5 date of receipt. A contribution made by United States mail or by
 6 common or contract carrier is not considered received during that
 7 period if it was properly addressed and placed with postage or
 8 carrier charges prepaid or prearranged in the mail or delivered to
 9 the contract carrier before the beginning of the period. The date
 10 indicated by the post office cancellation mark or the common or
 11 contract carrier documents is considered to be the date the
 12 contribution was placed in the mail or delivered to the common or
 13 contract carrier unless proven otherwise.

14 (c) This section does not apply to a political contribution
 15 that was made and accepted with the intent that it be used:

16 (1) in an election held or ordered during a ~~[the]~~
 17 period prescribed by Subsection (a) or (a-1) in which the person
 18 accepting the contribution is a candidate if the contribution was
 19 made after the person appointed a campaign treasurer with the
 20 appropriate authority and before the person was sworn in for that
 21 office;

22 (2) to defray expenses incurred in connection with an
 23 election contest; or

24 (3) by a person who holds a state office or a member of
 25 the legislature if the person or member was defeated at the general
 26 election held immediately before the session is convened or by a
 27 specific-purpose political committee that supports or assists only

1 that person or member.

2 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to
3 a political contribution made on or after the effective date of this
4 Act. A political contribution made before the effective date of
5 this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the
6 contribution was made, and the former law is continued in effect for
7 that purpose.

8 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.