

California Contribution Limits

What You Need to Know Before You Contribute – Fast Facts

Candidates seeking a state office and committees that make contributions to state candidates are subject to contribution limits from a single source. Contributions from affiliated entities are aggregated for purposes of the limits. (Regulation 18215.1.) The chart below shows the current limits per contributor and type of office sought. The primary, general, special, and special run-off elections are considered separate elections.

Per-election Limits on Contributions to State Candidates

(For elections held on or after January 1, 2009)

Contributor	Legislature	Statewide Except Governor	Governor
Person	\$3,900	\$6,500	\$25,900
Small Contributor Committee	\$7,800	\$12,900	\$25,900
Political Party	NO LIMIT	NO LIMIT	NO LIMIT

Calendar Year Limits on Contributions to Other State Committees

(2009 and 2010)

Contributor	Committee (Not Political Party) that Contributes to State Candidates	Political Party for State Candidates	Small Contributor Committee	Committee/Political Party Not for State Candidates
Person	\$6,500	\$32,400	\$200	NO LIMIT*

*State committees (including political parties) may receive contributions in excess of the limits identified above as long as the contributions are NOT used for state candidate contributions. (Regulation 18534.)

Calendar Year Limits on Contributions to State Officeholder Committees

Elected state officeholders may set up officeholder accounts subject to contribution limits specified below.

Contributor	Legislature	Statewide Except Governor	Governor
Any Source Person, Small Contributor Committee or Political Party	\$3,200	\$5,400	\$21,500
	Legislature	Statewide Except Governor	Governor
Aggregate From all Sources	\$53,800	\$107,500	\$215,000

- **Legal Defense Funds**

Contributions raised for a legal defense fund are not subject to contribution limits or the voluntary expenditure ceiling. However, a candidate or officeholder may raise, in total, no more than is reasonably necessary to cover attorney's fees and other legal costs related to the proceeding for which the fund is created. (Section 85304; Regulation 18530.4.)

- **Recall Elections**

A state officeholder who is the subject of a recall may set up a separate committee to oppose the qualification of the recall measure and, if the recall petition qualifies, the recall election. Neither contribution limits nor voluntary expenditure ceilings apply to the committee to oppose the recall that is

controlled by the officeholder who is the target of the recall attempt. Candidates running to replace an officeholder who is the target of a recall are subject to the contribution limits and the expenditure limits applicable to the election for that office. (Section 85315; Regulation 18531.5.)

- **Ballot Measure Committees**

Contributions to ballot measure committees controlled by a candidate for elective state office are not limited. For additional information see Contributions from State Candidates and Officeholders.

- **Contributions from State Candidates and Officeholders**

A state candidate or state officeholder may not contribute more than \$3,900 to a committee controlled by another state candidate or state officeholder (including a state or local election committee, legal defense fund, officeholder account, recall committee, or ballot measure committee). This is a one-time limit, not a per election or calendar year limit and includes, in the aggregate, contributions made from the candidate or officeholder's personal funds and from campaign funds. (Section 85305; Regulation 18535.)

- **Communications Identifying State Candidates**

Any committee that makes a payment or a promise of payment totaling \$50,000 or more for a communication that:

1. Clearly identifies a state candidate; but
2. Does not expressly advocate the election or defeat of the candidate; and
3. Is disseminated, broadcast, or otherwise published within 45 days of an election, may not receive a contribution from any single source of more than \$32,400 in a calendar year if the communication is made at the behest of the candidate featured in the communication. (Section 85310.)

- **Contributions from State Lobbyists**

A state lobbyist may not contribute to a state officeholder's or candidate's committee if the lobbyist is registered to lobby the agency of the elected officer or the agency to which the candidate is seeking election. The lobbyist also may not contribute to a local committee controlled by any such state candidate. (Section 85702; Regulation 18572.)

- **Contribution Limits for Local Candidates and Committees**

Check with the pertinent local jurisdiction for information regarding limits imposed by a local campaign ordinance.

Expenditure Ceilings

Using the formula specified in regulation 18544, the Commission has established the following voluntary expenditure ceilings for elections held on or after January 1, 2009:

Voluntary Expenditure Ceilings for Candidates for Elective State Offices

(For elections held on or after January 1, 2009)

Office	Primary/Special Election	General/Special Runoff Election
Assembly	\$518,000	\$906,000
Senate	\$777,000	\$1,165,000
Governor	\$7,768,000	\$12,946,000
Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, Controller, Secretary of State, Supt. of Public Instruction, Treasurer	\$5,178,000	\$7,768,000
Board of Equalization	\$1,295,000	\$1,942,000