

---

---

## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 465**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING EXPLORATORY COMMITTEES.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes to exploratory committee operations under the state campaign finance laws. By law, candidates may use exploratory committees to aid or promote their candidacies for the General Assembly, state office, or other public office before they determine if they want to run for that office.

The bill generally reduces the maximum contribution that exploratory committees may be given from \$375 to \$250. It also limits the total amount of contributions an exploratory committee may accept to \$5,000. Separately, the bill caps the length of time an exploratory committee may exist to 30 days. By law, unchanged by the bill, an exploratory committee must be tied to a specific election and only one exploratory committee may be formed per election cycle.

Additionally, the bill changes one of current law's triggers that require candidates to dissolve their exploratory committees and establish candidate committees. Under current law, this requirement is triggered if the candidate makes a "public declaration" of their intent to seek nomination or election to a particular public office. The bill specifies this includes statements by a candidate that they are determining whether to seek nomination or election to a particular public office.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes, including changing references of a "candidate's declaration of intent" to a "candidate's public declaration of intent."

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

## **CONTRIBUTION LIMITS FOR EXPLORATORY COMMITTEES**

By law, unchanged by the bill, candidates forming an exploratory committee must file a statement of organization on whether they are considering running for legislative, statewide, or another type of office. Under current law:

1. a candidate may certify on that statement that he or she will not be a candidate for state representative;
2. individuals may give up to \$375 to candidates who make this certification, but only up to \$250 to candidates who do not; and
3. a candidate that makes this certification and subsequently establishes a candidate committee for the office of state representative must pay the state treasurer an amount equal to the contributions over \$250 per person that the exploratory committee received.

The bill eliminates the opportunity to make this statement and the higher contribution threshold and instead sets the individual contribution limit for all exploratory committees at \$250.

The bill also similarly reduces the maximum contribution, from \$375 to \$250, that exploratory committees may receive from (1) political committees organized by business entities and certain labor organizations, (2) state central committees, (3) town committees, (4) political committees organized for ongoing political activities, and (5) political committees established for a single primary or election.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/23/2026)