

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Jessica Bourque 271-2104

SB 405, relative to amounts reported by political committees.

Hearing Date: February 3, 2026

Time Opened: 9:45 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:52 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Rochefort, Perkins Kwoka, Long and Gray

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Lang

Bill Analysis: This bill increases the limits on certain campaign donations reported by political committees.

Sponsors:

Sen. Gray

Who supports the bill: Senator James Gray

Who opposes the bill: 71 people signed in opposed to the bill. For a full list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Gray, Prime Sponsor, Senate District 6

- The latest revision of RSA 664:6 caused an issue. Previously, donations under \$50 within a cycle did not have to be reported. The cycle included the pre-primary, primary, and general election phases, allowing individuals to donate up to \$150 to a campaign. When it was changed, the amount was changed to \$50 over a two-year period.
- Small-dollar donors would like to donate to campaigns but don't necessarily want to be identified.
- Senator Gray noted that \$50 isn't enough to change a campaign's outcome.
- This doesn't fully solve the problem, but this is a good start.
- Strafford County likes to pass the hat, but under current law, people must contribute money and also report their names to ensure that total donations over two years do not go over \$50. For example, if someone attended 24 county meetings in two years and gave \$2 each time, they would be close to reaching the limit; giving \$3 would exceed it.

Senator Lang noted that making three \$20 donations without recording the first donor's name could exceed the \$50 limit, since the initial donation isn't reported. Since the three donations total more than \$50, that could be an accidental violation of the law.

Senator Gray said yes.

Senator Perkins Kwoka said she agrees with Senator Gray that these amounts are reasonable, but noted that \$1000 is higher than in many other states, where the highest limit is \$300. She asked how Senator Gray arrived at the \$1000 figure.

Senator Gray said he added \$200 per cycle, for a total of \$600, then rounded to the nearest "000" number. He noted that he reviewed donations the week before both the primary and the general election, and that all of these donations must be reported separately. He explained that his campaigns are small and do not require much spending, though he estimates spending about \$30,000, receiving around \$50,000 and donated the remaining funds to other campaigns and PACs. The task is to determine what percentage this amount represents of the total.