



CAMPAIGN UPDATE: October 24, 2022



Voluntary Spending Limits Lifted for City Council District 4 Candidates

This message confirms that more than \$28,000 in independent expenditures have been made related to the race for City Council District 4 by an independent committee.

Per the Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA), this means that the local voluntary spending limit for campaigns no longer applies to candidates seeking election to the office of City Council Member for District 4. **Candidates for City Council District 4 are therefore able to spend money over the 2022 expenditure ceiling of \$176,000. Spending limits for all other electoral races remain in effect.**

Voluntary spending limits, or expenditure ceilings, are not to be confused with **contribution limits**, which continue as follows:

- 1) District 4 candidates who signed OCRA Form 301 accepting the voluntary spending limit for the 2022 election may continue to raise money at \$900 per individual contributor/\$1,800 per qualified broad-based political committee, and the overall campaign expenditure ceiling no longer applies;
- 2) District 4 candidates who did not accept spending limit at the start of the campaign can still only raise \$200 per individual contributor/\$400 per broad-based political committee.

Background

The Oakland Campaign Reform Act imposes contribution limits and allows contributions at a higher limit for candidates that agree to a voluntary overall campaign expenditure ceiling. The purpose of this provision is to “limit overall expenditures in campaigns, thereby reducing the pressure on candidates to raise large campaign war chests for defensive purposes, beyond the amount necessary to communicate reasonably with voters.”¹

Oakland does not impose limits on independent expenditures, which are currently protected under federal law. The Oakland Campaign Reform Act does, however, provide for the lifting of the voluntary spending limit once independent expenditures reach the threshold for a particular race. For citywide races, such as Mayor and City Auditor, the threshold is more than \$131,000 in independent expenditures by a single committee to influence the election of a single office. For District City Council or School Board races, if a committee spends more than \$28,000 in independent expenditures to influence a District City Council or School Board District election, the applicable expenditure ceiling is no longer binding on any candidate running for the same office.

If you have any questions about these rules or their effect, please do not hesitate to contact us at ethicscommission@oaklandca.gov.

¹ O.M.C. Section 3.12.220.