



1 It is the intent of the Board of Supervisors that this ordinance complies with the free speech clauses  
2 of the United States and California Constitutions, and applicable decisional authority by the federal and  
3 state courts. To this end, the Board of Supervisors cites the findings of Pew Research Center, a well-  
4 established, national, non-partisan polling and analysis organization on the impact of money in politics and  
5 elections. In an October 23, 2023 article on research it has conducted, the Pew Research Center noted  
6 "widespread dissatisfaction with the role of money in American politics." Pew Research Center further  
7 noted that, "[l]arge shares of the public see political campaigns as too costly, elected officials as too  
8 responsive to donors and special interests," and federal representatives as "unable or unwilling to separate  
9 their financial interests from their work as public servants." Pew Research Center then noted seven facts--  
10 drawn from its own polling and analysis--about the influence of money on the political system and elected  
11 officials, of which five are highlighted as particularly applicable to Riverside County:

12 (1) Most Americans (72%) favor spending limits for political campaigns. Limits should be  
13 placed on the amount of money individuals and organizations can spend on political campaigns. This  
14 support "crosses ideological and demographic lines," garnering bipartisan support.

15 (2) Approximately (60%) of Americans say it is possible to have laws that would effectively  
16 reduce the role of money in politics. This includes a majority of Democrats and Republicans.

17 (3) The top three responses—comprising 36% of all responses—to an open-ended question on  
18 the biggest problem with elected officials were: too much influence by money (11%); corrupt elected  
19 officials (9%); and politicians do not work for the people they represent (16%). Thus, unprompted, more  
20 than a third of Americans expressed a compelling concern about the influence of money on elections and  
21 the quality of representation by elected officials.

22 (4) An overwhelming majority of Americans (86%) say the cost of political campaigns makes  
23 it hard for "good people" to run for office, with identical shares of Republicans and Democrats.

24 (5) A staggering majority of Americans (80%) say the people who donated a lot of money to a  
25 candidate's campaign have too much influence on the candidate. "By contrast, 70% of Americans say the  
26 people who live in [candidate] districts have *too little* influence over the decisions their representatives  
27 make."

28 Source: <https://pewrsr.ch/3QsrldF>

1 While state and federal court decisions prohibit campaign finance laws intended to “level the playing  
2 field” between everyday voters and the wealthy, corporations, Political Action Committees (PACs), and  
3 Super PACS, state and federal court decisions have upheld laws intended to prohibit actual and perceived  
4 corruption through *quid pro quo* exchanges. Research like the above from the Pew Research Center shows  
5 unified concern across the political spectrum for the integrity of elections, which necessarily includes  
6 elections for County Elective Office and, at a minimum, the perceived creation of *quid pro quo* corruption  
7 in favor of high value donors. The analysis is simple: people and organizations who give more, appear to  
8 get more from candidates after those candidates take office, and at the expense of everyone else. This  
9 ordinance seeks to empower Riverside County voters and strengthen the integrity of elections for County  
10 Elected Office by eliminating the perception of *quid pro quo* corruption.

11 Not only have Americans expressed a strong desire to see and feel candidates acting in their best  
12 interests once elected to office, but a supermajority of voters want their voices to be heard when making a  
13 donation to a candidate for a specific office, regardless of the size of that donation or the identity of the  
14 donor. The law is clear: when a donor gives money, they express support for a candidate for a specific  
15 office, and that expression is protected by the free speech clauses of the state and federal constitutions. But  
16 when a candidate then chooses to run for a different office, what becomes of the donor’s speech? The  
17 government cannot assume that the intended speech of the donor is extinguished, or that the donor  
18 necessarily supports the candidate running for that different office. The government cannot assume to know  
19 more than the donor who spoke before. The Board of Supervisors, as the people’s representatives, must  
20 conclude that the intrinsic value of the donor’s speech does not stop after the money is deposited. To the  
21 contrary, the Board of Supervisors recognizes and supports free speech by all people, regardless of form,  
22 made through their donations, regardless of politics, regardless of wealth, and regardless of status. Not  
23 abridging the speech or the original intended message of the people—all people—is a compelling interest  
24 underlying the very existence of government. If candidates do not respect the voice of the people who  
25 support them monetarily—regardless of the office those candidates seek—then the government ceases to  
26 be responsive to the people, in violation of the state and federal constitutions. This ordinance prohibits Intra-  
27 candidate transfers without the consent of donors to the first campaign. Further, all Intra-candidate transfers  
28 must be transparent and accounted for via prescribed methods.

1           Obtaining donor consent before making Intra-candidate transfers is a minimal time, place, and  
2 manner measure that balances a candidate’s right to expend contributions—which is protected as core  
3 political speech—with the equally compelling right of donors in not having their speech, in the form of  
4 their initial donation, diluted or destroyed by that transfer. Simply: if the donor agrees, in writing, then the  
5 candidate can complete the transfer of the donation, and anyone with an interest in the candidate’s finances  
6 will be able to account for the transfer via a widely accepted method of “Last in, First out.” This way, the  
7 integrity of a donor’s speech is maintained. Moreover, the appearance of any *quid pro quo* is diminished  
8 by requiring candidates to engage with the donor to continue earning the support originally obtained. Thus,  
9 the compelling government interest of protecting speech is met through the least restrictive means of  
10 additional paperwork.

11           Section 2.     AUTHORITY. This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the provisions of  
12 Government Code sections 85301, 85305, 85306, 85307, 85315, 85316, 85317, 85318, and 85702.5, as  
13 amended.

14           Section 3.     DEFINITIONS. As used in this ordinance, the following terms shall have  
15 the following meanings:

- 16           a. Candidate. As defined in the Political Reform Act provided that that the term  
17 shall be limited to candidates for County Elective Office for the purpose of this  
18 ordinance.
- 19           b. Committee. As defined in Government Code section 82013 of the Political  
20 Reform Act, as amended. A committee includes but is not limited to “controlled  
21 committee” and “independent committee”.
- 22           c. Contribution. As defined in Government Code section 82015 of the Political  
23 Reform Act, as amended.
- 24           d. Controlled Committee. Any committee which is controlled directly or indirectly  
25 by a candidate or which acts jointly with a candidate or controlled committee in  
26 connection with the making of expenditures. A candidate controls a committee if  
27 he or she, his or her agent, or any other committee such candidate controls has a  
28 significant influence on the actions or decisions of the committee.

- 1 e. County Elective Office. The offices of: Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder;  
2 Auditor-Controller; Board Supervisor; District Attorney; Sheriff-Coroner and  
3 Public Administrator; Superintendent of Schools; and Treasurer-Tax Collector.
- 4 f. Election. Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, any primary, general,  
5 special, or recall election held in this state. The primary, general, special, or  
6 recall elections are all separate elections for the purpose of this ordinance.
- 7 g. Independent Committee. All committees other than controlled committees.
- 8 h. Independent Expenditure. An expenditure made by any person, including a  
9 payment of public monies by a state or local governmental agency, in connection  
10 with a communication that expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly  
11 identified candidate; or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a clearly identified  
12 measure; or taken as a whole and in context, unambiguously urges a particular  
13 result in an election but otherwise is not made to, or at the behest of, the affected  
14 candidate or committee.
- 15 i. Intra-candidate Transfers. The moving of funds from the campaign of one  
16 candidate in a local, state, or federal election to the campaign of the same  
17 candidate in a County election.
- 18 j. Last in, First out. Campaign funds being transferred are attributed to the  
19 transferring committee's contributors in reverse chronological order beginning  
20 with the most recent of its contributors or, if there has been a prior transfer,  
21 beginning with the most recent contributor for which unattributed contributions  
22 remain.
- 23 k. Person. An individual, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, syndicate,  
24 business trust, company, corporation, limited liability company, association,  
25 committee, and any other organization or group of persons acting in concert.
- 26 l. Political Reform Act. The California Political Reform Act of 1974 (Government  
27 Code Sections 81000 et seq., as amended).

28 Section 4. CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMITS.

- 1 a. No person shall make to a candidate for County Elective Office, or to a controlled  
2 committee of that candidate, a contribution totaling more than twenty thousand  
3 dollars (\$20,000) per election.
- 4 b. No candidate for County Elective Office, nor a controlled committee of that  
5 candidate, shall accept from a person a contribution totaling more than twenty  
6 thousand dollars (\$20,000) per election.
- 7 c. Any candidate for County Elective Office who seeks to do an Intra-candidate  
8 transfer, shall first obtain the written consent of all donors comprising the amount  
9 to be transferred, and shall do so use a Last in, First out accounting method for  
10 such transfer. No Intra-candidate transfer shall be made without compliance with  
11 this subsection.
- 12 d. The limitations of this section do not apply to a candidate's contributions of the  
13 candidate's personal funds to the candidate's own campaign.
- 14 e. The limitations of this section do not apply to independent expenditures.
- 15 f. In the event that a candidate for County Elective Office contributes more than  
16 twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) of the candidate's personal funds to the  
17 candidate's own campaign, or is the beneficiary of an independent expenditure  
18 of more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), or conduct an Intra-candidate  
19 transfer of campaign funds totaling more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000)  
20 from one controlled committee or campaign fund account to another controlled  
21 committee or campaign fund account, all other candidates running in the election  
22 for that same County Elective Office are exempted from the campaign  
23 contribution limits of this Section 4 for the same election.
- 24 g. Beginning in January 2023, the campaign contribution limits in subsections a.,  
25 b., and f. of this section shall be increased by three percent (3%) on January 1<sup>st</sup>  
26 of every odd-numbered year. The Registrar of Voters shall maintain a record of  
27 any increased contribution limits pursuant to this subsection and shall make such  
28 record available to the public and all candidates for County Elective Office.

1 h. Unless otherwise stated herein, the limits provided in the Political Reform Act,  
2 or as otherwise provided by federal law, apply.

3 Section 5. CONTRIBUTION LIMITS TO OTHER CANDIDATES. A candidate for  
4 County Elective Office or a controlled committee of that candidate shall not make a campaign contribution  
5 to any other candidate for County Elective Office in excess of the limits set forth in section 4. of this  
6 ordinance.

7 Section 6. LOANS. A candidate for County Elective Office shall not personally loan to  
8 the candidate's campaign, including the proceeds of a loan obtained by the candidate from a commercial  
9 lending institution, an amount, the outstanding balance of which exceeds one hundred thousand dollars  
10 (\$100,000). A candidate for County Elective Office shall not charge interest on any loan the candidate  
11 made to the candidate's campaign.

12 Section 7. RECALL CAMPAIGNS. An elected officer of a County Elective Office may  
13 establish a committee to oppose the qualification of a recall measure, and the recall election. This  
14 committee may be established when the elected officer receives a notice of intent to recall pursuant to  
15 Elections Code section 11021. An elected officer of a County Elective Office may accept campaign  
16 contributions to oppose the qualification of a recall measure, and if qualification is successful, the recall  
17 election, without regard to the campaign contribution limits set forth in this ordinance. After the failure of  
18 a recall petition or after the recall election, the committee formed by the elected officer of a County Elective  
19 Office shall wind down its activities and dissolve. Any remaining funds shall be treated as surplus funds  
20 and shall be expended within thirty (30) days after the failure of the recall petition or after the recall election  
21 for a purpose specified in Government Code section 89519, subdivision (b).

22 Section 8. CONTRIBUTIONS AFTER ELECTION. A contribution for an election  
23 may be accepted by a candidate for County Elective Office after the date of the election only to the extent  
24 that the contribution does not exceed net debts outstanding from the election, and the contribution does not  
25 otherwise exceed the applicable contribution limits for that election as set forth in section 4. of this  
26 ordinance.

27 Section 9. CARRY OVER CONTRIBUTIONS. Notwithstanding section 4. subsection  
28 c. of this ordinance, a candidate for County Elective Office may carry over contributions raised in

1 connection with one election for County Elective Office to pay campaign expenditures incurred in  
2 connection with a subsequent election for the same County Elective Office.

3 Section 10. CONTRIBUTIONS BEFORE ELECTION. A candidate for County Elective  
4 Office may raise contributions for a general election before the primary election, and for a special general  
5 election before a special primary election, for the same County Elective Office if the candidate sets aside  
6 these contributions for the general election or special general election. If the candidate for County Elective  
7 Office is defeated in the primary election or special primary election, or otherwise withdraws from the  
8 general election or special general election, the general election or special general election funds shall be  
9 refunded to the contributors on a pro rata basis less any expenses associated with the raising and  
10 administration of general election or special election contributions. Notwithstanding Government Code  
11 section 85201, candidates for County Elective Office may establish separate campaign contribution  
12 accounts for the primary and general elections or special primary and special general elections.

13 Section 11. VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES.

- 14 a. Except for elections in which section 4, subsection f, has been triggered to exempt  
15 campaign contribution limits for a particular County Elective Office, any person  
16 who knowingly and willfully makes or causes to make a campaign contribution  
17 to a candidate for a County Elective Office, or to a controlled committee of that  
18 candidate, in excess of the campaign contribution limits in this ordinance shall  
19 be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to one thousand dollars  
20 (\$1,000) or imprisonment for up to six months, or both.
- 21 b. Except for elections in which section 4, subsection f, has been triggered to exempt  
22 campaign contribution limits for a particular County Elective Office, any  
23 candidate for County Elective Office, or any controlled committee of that  
24 candidate, who knowingly and willfully obtains or receives a campaign  
25 contribution in excess of the campaign contribution limits in this ordinance and  
26 fails to return the excess amount of the contribution over the limits in this  
27 ordinance to the contributor within a reasonable period of time shall be guilty of  
28

1 a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or  
2 imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

3 c. Knowingly and willfully violating any provision of this ordinance shall be  
4 deemed a misdemeanor punishable by a fine or up to one thousand dollars  
5 (\$1,000) or imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

6 Section 12. ENFORCEMENT. The District Attorney shall enforce the provisions of this  
7 ordinance. In the event there is a complaint alleging a violation of this ordinance by the District Attorney,  
8 the District Attorney shall declare a conflict and request that another District Attorney’s office or the State  
9 Attorney General conduct the investigation and enforcement.

10 Section 13. ELECTRONIC CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURE. Nothing in this  
11 ordinance alters the requirements for electronic filing of campaign statements and the required online  
12 reporting of contributions and independent expenditures in Ordinance No. 913 which shall continue to be  
13 complied with by all candidates for County Elective Office.

14 Section 14. SEVERABILITY. If any provision, clause, sentence or paragraph of this  
15 ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall be held invalid, such invalidity  
16 shall not affect the other provisions of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision  
17 or application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

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19 Section 15. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after  
20 its adoption.”

21 **Adopted:** 963 Item 3.1 of 11/17/2020 (Eff: 01/01/2021)

22 **Amended:** 963.1 Item 3.09 of 10/07/2025 (Eff:11/05/2025)(Pub:10/16/2025)