



January 27, 2025

**CONTACT:**

Executive Director Sharon Spivak, [sbspivak@san Diego.gov](mailto:sbspivak@san Diego.gov)

Legislative Program Manager Megan Curran, [mcurran@san Diego.gov](mailto:mcurran@san Diego.gov)

Ethics Commission Main Line: 619-533-3476, [ethicscommission@san Diego.gov](mailto:ethicscommission@san Diego.gov)

### **Changes to the Levine Act in 2025**

On January 1, 2025, amendments to California Government Code 84308 (the Levine Act) took effect, impacting California's elected officials who are subject to its jurisdiction. The Ethics Commission is providing this memorandum to assist local officials as they familiarize themselves with the amendments.

#### Background on the Levine Act

The Levine Act was enacted in 1982 to prohibit "pay-to-play" politics in California. The Levine Act prohibits public officials from accepting contributions that could affect their decision-making regarding "a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use," and requires public officials to disclose contributions on the record and recuse in some circumstances. Initially the Levine Act applied only to "any elected or appointed officer of an agency, any alternate to an elected or appointed officer of an agency, and any candidate for elective office in an agency."

As of January 1, 2023, local elected officials became subject to the Levine Act.<sup>1</sup> SB 1439 amended the Levine Act to apply existing state laws to local government agencies, including city councils, for the first time.

In September 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom signed two bills further amending the Levine Act: [Senate Bills \(SB\) 1243](#) and [1181](#).

#### Amendments Now in Effect

SB 1243 and 1181 amended the Levine Act in a few key ways, including by:

---

<sup>1</sup> For details regarding the 2022 amendments to the Levine Act, please see the Ethics Commission's website, [www.sandiego.gov/ethics](http://www.sandiego.gov/ethics) for press releases dated: [November 14, 2022](#), [November 18, 2022](#), [June 21, 2023](#), and [March 19, 2024](#).

- Raising the threshold for contributions from \$250 to \$500;
- Extending the period during which an officer may cure a violation from 14 days to within 30 days of accepting, soliciting, or directing the contribution, whichever is latest;
- Restricting the types of contracts that qualify as a “license, permit, or other entitlement for use;”
- Defining when a proceeding is “pending” for officers, parties, participants, and agents; and
- Exempting a city attorney who does not have the authority to make a final decision in the proceeding from the definition of “officer.”

Please note that the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) presented [proposed amendments](#) to the regulations governing the Levine Act at its January 16, 2025 meeting. See FPPC Agenda Item 8. The FPPC noted that it anticipates adopting revised regulations at its meeting on March 20, 2025.

The San Diego Ethics Commission will continue to monitor developments related to the Levine Act and is available to educate and advise the community regarding the Ethics Commission’s interpretation of the law. You may reach out to the Ethics Commission with any questions by calling 619-533-3476 or emailing our office at [ethicscommission@sandiego.gov](mailto:ethicscommission@sandiego.gov).

Please note, however, that the FPPC has sole jurisdiction to administer, interpret, and enforce the Political Reform Act (PRA), the amended statutory language, and any associated regulations. The FPPC is the enforcement agency for Levine Act violations. Accordingly, you may also direct any questions to the FPPC at [advice@fppc.ca.gov](mailto:advice@fppc.ca.gov).

—

The Ethics Commission is an independent City entity dedicated to monitoring, enforcing, and reforming the City’s ethics laws. The Commission has jurisdiction over City laws regarding ethics, campaign finance, and lobbying. Commission staff provide the regulated community with education and advice regarding ethics laws, conduct investigations, audit City campaign committees, and propose related legislation.

For more information, we invite you to visit our website, [www.sandiego.gov/ethics](http://www.sandiego.gov/ethics), or to contact our office at [ethicscommission@sandiego.gov](mailto:ethicscommission@sandiego.gov).