

HB358 INTRODUCED



1 HB358
2 2JVVRK-1
3 By Representatives Oliver, Hurst, Brinyark, Barnes, Brown,
4 Marques, Sorrells, Allbright, Stringer, DuBose
5 RFD: Ethics and Campaign Finance
6 First Read: 29-Jan-26



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4 SYNOPSIS:

5 This bill would require agents of hostile
6 foreign principals who engage in political activity in
7 this state and foreign supported political
8 organizations that engage in political activity in this
9 state to register with the Secretary of State.

10 This bill would provide for the information that
11 must be included on registration forms and require
12 periodic registration updates.

13 This bill would authorize the Secretary of State
14 to impose civil penalties for violations of this act.

15 This bill would authorize persons upon whom a
16 civil penalty is imposed to appeal to the State Ethics
17 Commission.

18 This bill would authorize the State Ethics
19 Commission to reduce or set aside a civil penalty.

20 This bill would also define terms.

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23 A BILL
24 TO BE ENTITLED
25 AN ACT

27 Relating to political activity; to require certain
28 agents of hostile foreign principals and foreign supported

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29 political organizations to register with the Secretary of
30 State; to establish registration requirements; to authorize
31 the Secretary of State to impose civil penalties; and to
32 authorize the State Ethics Commission to hear appeals.

33 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

34 Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the following:

35 (1) The voters, residents, and policymakers of Alabama
36 are entitled to transparency in the political and propaganda
37 activities of organizations that may be controlled by or under
38 the influence of foreign countries hostile to the interests of
39 the United States and the State of Alabama.

40 (2) In an increasingly globalized world, determining
41 whether an organization's political and propaganda activities
42 are funded by hostile foreign interests is often difficult.

43 (3) Legislation is needed to ensure the transparency
44 necessary to allow voters, residents, and policymakers to
45 evaluate whether political and propaganda activities are
46 funded by potentially hostile foreign actors.

47 Section 2. As used in this act, the following terms
48 have the following meanings:

49 (1) AGENT OF A HOSTILE FOREIGN PRINCIPAL. Any person
50 who acts as an agent, employee, representative, or servant, or
51 otherwise acts at the order, request, or under the direction
52 or control of a hostile foreign principal: (i) whose actions
53 are financed in whole or in part by a hostile foreign
54 principal; and (ii) who engages in political activity.

55 (2) COMMISSION. The State Ethics Commission.

56 (3) FOREIGN SUPPORTED POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. A

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57 political organization or partnership, committee, association,
58 corporation, limited liability company, limited liability
59 partnership, trust, professional corporation, or any other
60 combination of persons that has, within the past five calendar
61 years, received money or other things of value from a hostile
62 foreign principal or an agent of a hostile foreign principal
63 and which engages in political activity. The term does not
64 include an industry, trade, or professional association that
65 exists to promote the interests of its members, or any
66 affiliated organization.

67 (4) HOSTILE FOREIGN COUNTRY. All of the following:

- 68 a. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- 69 b. The Islamic Republic of Iran.
- 70 c. The People's Republic of China.
- 71 d. The Russian Federation.

72 (5) HOSTILE FOREIGN PRINCIPAL. Any of the following:

73 a. A government of a hostile foreign country, a
74 political party of a hostile foreign country, or any member of
75 a political party, body, or organization of a hostile foreign
76 country.

77 b. A nonresident alien of a hostile foreign country.
78 c. A partnership, committee, association, corporation,
79 limited liability company, limited liability partnership,
80 trust, professional corporation, or any other combination of
81 persons organized under the law of or having its principal
82 place of business in a hostile foreign country.

83 d. A domestic partnership, association, corporation,
84 organization, or other combination of persons that is at least



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85 20 percent beneficially owned by a hostile foreign country, a
86 nonresident alien of a hostile foreign country, or an entity
87 organized under the laws of or having its principal place of
88 business in a hostile foreign country.

89 (6) POLITICAL ACTIVITY. Any activity that is performed
90 to influence any agency or public official of the state,
91 county, or municipality, or any state or local political
92 subdivision, or to influence the public within the state,
93 relating to the formulation, adoption, or change in the
94 policies or laws of the state or electing or opposing a
95 candidate for state or local public office.

96 Section 3. (a) No person shall act as an agent of a
97 hostile foreign principal unless he or she has filed with the
98 Secretary of State a true and complete registration statement
99 as required by this act. Every person who becomes an agent of
100 a hostile foreign principal, within 10 days of becoming an
101 agent, shall file with the Secretary of State a registration
102 statement, under oath, on a form prescribed by the Secretary
103 of State. The obligation of an agent of a hostile foreign
104 principal to file a registration statement shall continue from
105 day to day, and termination of that status shall not relieve
106 the agent from his or her obligation to file a registration
107 statement for the period during which he or she was an agent
108 of a hostile foreign principal. The registration statement
109 shall include all of the following, which shall be regarded as
110 material for the purposes of this section:

111 (1) The registrant's name, principal business address,
112 and all other business addresses in the United States or

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113 elsewhere, and all residence addresses, if any.

114 (2) The status of the registrant as follows:

115 a. If an individual, his or her nationality.

116 b. If a partnership, the name, residence addresses, and
117 nationality of each partner, as well as a true and complete
118 copy of its articles of copartnership.

119 c. If an association, corporation, organization, or any
120 other combination of individuals or entities, the name,
121 residence addresses, and nationality of each director and
122 officer and of each individual performing the functions of a
123 director or officer, a true and complete copy of its charter,
124 articles of incorporation, association, constitution, and
125 bylaws and amendments thereto; a copy of every other
126 instrument or document and a statement of the terms and
127 conditions of every oral agreement relating to its
128 organization, powers, and purposes, and a statement of its
129 ownership and control.

130 (3) A comprehensive statement of the nature of the
131 registrant's business, including a complete list of
132 registrant's employees.

133 (4) A statement of the nature of the work of each
134 hostile foreign principal for whom the registrant is acting,
135 assuming or purporting to act, or has agreed to act, the
136 character of the business, or other activities of every
137 hostile foreign principal. If a hostile foreign principal is
138 an entity other than a natural person, the statement shall
139 also detail the ownership and control to which the hostile
140 foreign principal is supervised, directed, owned, controlled,



141 financed, or subsidized, in whole or in part, by any
142 government of a foreign country or foreign political party, or
143 by any other hostile foreign principal.

144 (5) The nature and amount of contributions, income,
145 money, or things of value, if any, that the registrant has
146 received within the preceding 60 days from each hostile
147 foreign principal, either as compensation or for disbursement
148 or otherwise, and the form and time of each payment and from
149 whom received.

150 (6) A detailed statement of every activity that the
151 registrant is performing or is assuming or purporting or has
152 agreed to perform for himself or herself or any other person
153 other than a hostile foreign principal and that requires
154 registration pursuant to this act.

155 (7) With regard to any person other than a hostile
156 foreign principal for whom the registrant is acting, assuming
157 or purporting to act, or has agreed to act under circumstances
158 that would require his or her registration under this section,
159 all of the following:

160 a. The name, business, and residence addresses, and if
161 an individual, the nationality, of the person.

162 b. The nature and amount of contributions, income,
163 money, or things of value, if any, that the registrant has
164 received during the preceding 60 days from the person in
165 connection with any of the person's activities.

166 (8) A detailed statement of the money and other things
167 of value spent or disposed of by the registrant during the
168 preceding 60 days in furtherance of or in connection with



169 activities that require the registrant's registration under
170 this section and that have been undertaken by the registrant
171 either as an agent of a hostile foreign principal or for
172 himself or herself or any other person or in connection with
173 any activities relating to the registrant becoming an agent of
174 the principal.

175 (9) A detailed statement of any contributions of money
176 or other things of value made by the registrant during the
177 preceding 60 days to bring about the nomination or election of
178 a candidate for any office or to bring about the approval or
179 rejection by the voters of any proposed constitutional
180 amendment.

181 (10) Such other statements, information, or documents
182 pertinent to the purposes of this section as the Secretary of
183 State may from time to time require.

184 (b) Every agent of a hostile foreign principal who has
185 filed a registration statement required by subsection (a),
186 within 30 days after the expiration of each six-month period
187 succeeding such filing, shall file with the Secretary of State
188 a supplement thereto, under oath, on a form prescribed by the
189 Secretary of State, which shall set forth with respect to the
190 preceding six-month period such facts as the Secretary of
191 State may deem necessary to make the information required
192 under subsection (a) accurate, complete, and current with
193 respect to that period.

194 (c) An agent of a hostile foreign principal shall
195 update the information required by subsection (b) with the
196 Secretary of State every 90 days.



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197 (d) The registration statement shall be executed under
198 oath as follows:

199 (1) If the registrant is an individual, by him or her.

200 (2) If the registrant is a partnership, by the majority
201 of the members thereof.

202 (3) If the registrant is a person other than an
203 individual or a partnership, by a majority of the officers
204 thereof or persons performing the functions of officers or by
205 a majority of the board of directors thereof or persons
206 performing the functions of directors, if any.

207 (e) A registration statement or supplement required to
208 be filed under this section shall be filed in electronic form,
209 in addition to any other form that may be required by the
210 Secretary of State.

211 Section 4. (a) No later than December 31 annually, each
212 foreign supported political organization operating within the
213 state shall register with the Secretary of State and provide
214 all of the following information:

215 (1) The name of the foreign supported political
216 organization, its business address, and the names, titles, and
217 addresses of all officers and directors of the foreign
218 supported political organization.

219 (2) If the foreign supported political organization is
220 affiliated with or a chapter of a national organization, the
221 name of the national organization, its address, and the names
222 and addresses of its officers and directors.

223 (3) A detailed statement of the money and other things
224 of value spent or disposed of by the foreign supported

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225 political organization during the preceding calendar year in
226 furtherance of or in connection with activities to influence
227 any agency or public official, local government entity, or the
228 public within the State of Alabama, including, but not limited
229 to, activities related to formulating, adopting, or changing
230 the policies or laws of this state or electing a candidate to
231 local or state public office.

232 (4) A detailed statement of any expenditures of money
233 or other things of value made by the foreign supported
234 political organization within the prior calendar year.

235 (5) A detailed statement of all money or other things
236 of value received by the foreign supported political
237 organization from a hostile foreign principal or an agent of a
238 hostile foreign principal during the preceding calendar year.

239 (b) A registered foreign supported organization shall
240 update the information required by subsection (a) with the
241 Secretary of State every 90 days.

242 Section 5. Upon receipt of a complaint that an agent of
243 a hostile foreign principal or a foreign supported political
244 organization has failed to comply with the registration and
245 reporting requirements of this act, or upon its own
246 determination, the Secretary of State shall investigate, and
247 upon finding a violation, impose civil penalties of up to ten
248 thousand dollars (\$10,000) for failure to timely file a
249 statement required by this act.

250 If the Secretary of State finds that a violation was
251 willful or a repeat violation of this act, the civil penalties
252 shall be not less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) nor more

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253 than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) per such
254 violation.

255 Section 6. (a) Any person upon whom a civil penalty has
256 been imposed pursuant to Section 5 may seek a review of the
257 penalty by filing a written notice with the Secretary of State
258 no later than 21 days after the date on which notification of
259 the imposition of the penalty was sent. The Secretary of State
260 shall refer the review to the State Ethics Commission.

261 (b) The commission may set aside or reduce a civil
262 penalty upon a showing of good cause. The person seeking
263 review shall bear the burden of proof.

264 Section 7. This act shall become effective on October
265 1, 2026.