



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3000 • Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-5660 • Fax (916) 322-0886

May 23, 2019

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3076
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Senate Bill 300 (Umberg) – Foreign Contributions - SUPPORT

Dear Senate Umberg

On May 16, 2019, the bi-partisan Fair Political Practices Commission voted to support Senate Bill 300, a bill that will expand the existing foreign contribution ban to California state and local candidates.

The Political Reform Act prohibits foreign government or principal from making a contribution or expenditure *in connection with a ballot measure*, and also prohibits a person or committee from soliciting or accepting a contribution from a foreign government or principal for this purpose. This bill would expand the scope of these prohibitions by also prohibiting a foreign government or principal from making a contribution or expenditure, and a person or committee from soliciting or accepting this type of contribution *in connection with the qualification, support, or opposition to, a state or local candidate*.

While this activity is currently prohibited under federal law, this bill expands the Commission's authority to enforce incidents of foreign contributions of expenditures in California campaigns should the Federal Election Commission not act.

In December 2015, the Commission successfully prosecuted and approved a stipulation against MindGeek for making illegal foreign contributions. In light of our Enforcement Division's successful efforts in that case, the Commission believe we should have concurrent authority to timely act in any case of foreign contribution violations.

The Commission strongly supports SB 300 because it will help protect the integrity of California campaigns from improper influence of foreign interests. If you have any questions, please contact Jay Wierenga at jwierenga@fppc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Jones
Executive Director