



(Approved September XX, 2026)

CALIFORNIA FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
MINUTES OF HEARING, Public Session
Thursday, August 20, 2026
10:00 a.m.

Present: Chair Adam E. Silver, Commissioner Alf W. Brandt, Commissioner Elsa Ortiz,
Commissioner E. Dotson Wilson

Executive Staff Present:

Galena West, Executive Director
Dave Bainbridge, General Counsel
Kendall L.D. Bonebrake, Chief of Enforcement
Shrdha Shah, Chief of Audits and Assistance
Jue Wang, PhD, Chief of Administration
Lindsey Nakano, Senior FPPC Legislative Counsel
Shery Yang, Communications Director

Call to Order.

Chair Silver called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

1. Public Comments for items not on the agenda.

Mr. Jon Kaji made public comment. Ms. Priscilla Ouchida made public comment. Ms. Patsy
Okada made public comment.

2. Approval of June 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: To approve the June 2026 Meeting Minutes. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz,
seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion passed 3-0, Commissioner Brandt abstained.

3-9. Consent Calendar

3. Adoption of Proposed Regulation 18420.5, Permitting Combined Campaign Reports.

Senior Commission Counsel Jenna Rinehart addressed two requests received through public comment by the City of San Diego and shared her recommendations.

4. In the Matter of Nevada County; FPPC No. 21/292.

Commissioner Ortiz voiced her concern about the basic illegality of local agencies using taxpayers' money and the FPPC not having the authority to further prosecute these cases. Commissioner Brandt voiced a related concern that agencies in violation view the fine as a cost of doing business, and that a change in statute may be needed. Commissioner Wilson emphasized that taxpayers bear the cost of these violations and that elected officials might think twice before violating the law if they faced personal liability. Chair Silver highlighted proposed legislation by Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom regarding large-format public advertisements at public expense, which would hold public officials who approved the publication liable for fines, as well. Chair Silver suggested holding a Law and Policy Committee meeting in the fall to discuss options for legislation. Mr. John Young made public comment.

5. In the Matter of Sonoma County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, Sonoma County Deputy Sheriffs' Association PAC, Committee for Transparent Justice – No on Measure P, Michael Vail, and Cody Ebert; FPPC No. 20/1111.

Chair Silver complimented Senior Commission Counsel Neal Bucknell and Special Investigator Kristin Hamilton for their work on this case.

6. In the Matter of James Knell, 127 WCP, LLC, 710 State St. Partners, LP, 1129 State Street, LP, 1213 State Street, LLC, 1221 Victoria Court, LP, RTK Associates, LP, Santa Barbara Athletic Club, Sima Corporation, Sima El Paseo, LP, and Sima Management Corporation; FPPC No. 21/1022.

- 7. In the Matter of Gaspar Gene Montesano, Joe's Cafe, Inc., Lucky Village, Inc., Quattro, Inc., and Breadhead, Inc.; FPPC No. 26/582.**
- 8. In the Matter of Citizens for Laguna's Future and Glenn Gray; FPPC No. 23/009.**
- 9. In the Matter of Rob Rennie for Assembly 2022, Rob Rennie, and Isabella Rennie; FPPC No. 25/049.**

MOTION: To approve the Consent Calendar. Moved by Commissioner Ortiz, seconded by Chair Silver. The motion passed 4-0.

10. Pre-Notice Default

- 10. In the Matter of "Jackie" Chen AKA Jiading Chen AKA Jia D Chen AKA Jiacling Chen; FPPC No. 24/1047.**

Enforcement Chief Bonebrake stated that the respondent has made contact with Enforcement.

11-16. General Items

- 11. Adoption of Proposed Amendments to Regulations 18360.1-18360.3; Political Reform Education Program and Streamline Resolution Program for Low-Level Enforcement Violations.**

Commission Counsel Simon Russell presented the item. Commissioner Wilson commented that the regulations are an evolving process and are updated to reflect changes in the law. Commissioner Ortiz asked how public harm is measured, as there is no definition in law. Enforcement Chief Bonebrake answered that public harm is measured by reviewing the totality of the circumstances and collecting as much information as possible to make a determination. Chair Silver disclosed ex parte communications with the California Political Attorneys Association's Enforcement

Committee, including Jay Carson of Nielsen Merksamer and K.C. Jenkins of Bell McAndrews.

MOTION: To adopt Regulations 18360.1-18360.3. Moved by Commissioner Brandt, seconded by Commissioner Ortiz. Approved 4-0.

12. Adoption of Proposed Regulation 18450.12 and Amendments to Regulation 18401, AI use in Campaign Advertisement Disclosure and Related Recordkeeping.

Senior Commission Counsel Zachary Norton presented the item. Commissioner Brandt shared his takeaways from the July 16, 2026, Law and Policy Committee meeting. These included that the disclaimer requirement in Government Code Section 84514 is meant to: (1) apply only where deceptive AI-generated or altered media is present; (2) be triggered only by audio and visual media, not text or copy; and (3) require consideration of the advertisement as a whole and the context in which the media appears. Chair Silver also shared his takeaways from the meeting, including that the legislative history of AB 2355 – the bill that established the disclaimer requirement – strongly suggests that the requirement is directed at deceptive uses of AI, not simply any use of AI.

Commissioner Ortiz asked how the disclaimer must appear on advertisements. General Counsel Bainbridge quoted Section 84514, which requires that it appear in a clear and conspicuous manner with the following disclosure: “Ad generated or substantially altered using artificial intelligence.” Commissioner Wilson noted that this disclaimer requirement is limited to individuals and entities that qualify as political committees under state law.

Mr. Norton presented several examples illustrating the application of Section 84514 and proposed Regulation 18450.12. He explained that a minor AI alteration to a candidate’s

smile would not trigger a disclaimer, while altering supporters' signs in an authentic rally photograph so that the event appeared materially different, or generating audio in an identifiable candidate's voice in which the candidate made a statement the candidate never made, would trigger the disclaimer.

Chair Silver asked whether the use of an unidentified AI-generated voice in an ad would trigger the disclaimer. Mr. Norton explained that, if the voice is not identifiable, its inclusion would not, standing alone, trigger the disclaimer. He further noted that the analysis could differ if the voice were presented as that of a particular person or as the authentic voice of an actual individual, such as a local business owner or tax-law expert.

Mr. Norton further explained that AI-generated stock images of the California State Capitol or a generic classroom would not, standing alone, require the disclaimer, although the surrounding text, narration, or other context could change the result. For example, an AI-generated or altered image of the State Capitol on fire, presented as depicting an actual condition or event, would trigger the disclaimer requirement.

Mr. Norton emphasized that the analysis must consider the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the media appears, to determine whether the disclaimer is required. Chair Silver stated that the relevant inquiry is whether, considering the advertisement as a whole and the context in which it appears, the AI-generated or altered media would mislead a reasonable person as to the authenticity of the media. The inquiry focuses on how a reasonable person would understand the media, not on whether the committee intended to deceive or mislead.

Mr. Norton explained that the proposed amendments to Regulation 18401 make explicit that the existing recordkeeping requirements mandate retention of a full and accurate copy of each advertisement. He also noted that if an authentic image, audio, or video is provided to an artificial intelligence system as source or reference material for media included in a qualified political advertisement, the material must be retained in the same file format and condition in which it was provided to the system, including any metadata contained in the file.

Mr. Ken Wang of the California Initiative for Technology and Democracy (CITED) suggested during public comment that the proposed amendments to Regulation 18401 use the term “provenance data” rather than “metadata.” At Commissioner Wilson’s request, Chair Silver read into the record the definition of “metadata” from Merriam-Webster online: “data that provides information about other data.” Chief Information Officer Jesse Hidalgo defined metadata as data that provides a list of attributes associated with a digital file, including authorship and manner of creation. The Chair also noted that the regulations had been shared with the California Political Attorneys Association and that they did not raise any concerns with using the term “metadata.”

MOTION: To adopt Regulation 18450.12 and the amendments to Regulation 18401. Moved by Commissioner Brandt, seconded by Commissioner Wilson. Approved 4-0.

13. 2026-2027 Budget Act.

Chief of Administration Dr. Wang confirmed for Commissioner Wilson that the proposed budget will cover AI development costs and staffing needs.

14. Legislative Update.

FPPC Senior Legislative Counsel Lindsey Nakano presented the item.

15. Executive Staff Reports.

Chief Bonebrake presented the Enforcement Division Staff Report as submitted and noted that Enforcement has received 1,052 complaints to date and is on track to exceed past election years. Chief Bonebrake confirmed for Commissioner Brandt that there has been a rise in the volume of complaints as individuals are using AI to generate their complaints and their arguments.

Chief of Audits Shah presented the Audits and Assistance Division Staff Report as submitted.

General Counsel Bainbridge presented the Legal Division Staff Report and noted that a behested payment video tutorial has been launched and a tutorial for the Form 410 will be up on the FPPC website soon. Chair Silver directed the Legal Division to remove two proposed regulatory projects from the regulatory calendar to focus greater resources towards responding to advice inquiries: “Reporting behested payments as other payments to influence (OPTI)” and “Economic interest in affiliated non-profit organization.”

Chief of Administration Dr. Wang presented the Administration and Technology Division Staff Report as submitted.

16. Commissioner Comments and Proposed Future Agenda Items.

Commissioner Brandt proposed a Law and Policy Committee meeting in October to discuss legislation.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Davina Vo

Commission Assistant
Approved September XX, 2026

Adam E. Silver, Chair
Fair Political Practices Commission