

Subject: RE: Public Records Request (OH-SEN-24-1615)
Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 6:07:56 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: William.Cox@ohiosenate.gov
To: AO Records
CC: Matt.Oyster@ohiosenate.gov
Attachments: image001.png, Records Combined.pdf

EXTERNAL SENDER

Ben,

Attached are the records responsive to your request (OH-SEN-24-1615). Please note that items subject to legislative privilege (R.C. 101.30) and attorney-client privilege (R.C. 101.301, 149.43, and *State ex rel. Leslie v. Ohio Hous. Fin. Agency*, 105 Ohio St.3d 261, 2005-Ohio-1508) have been withheld.

Respectfully,
Will



William J. Cox
Deputy General Counsel
Ohio Senate
(614) 466-8212

From: AO Records <records@americanoversight.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2024 1:12 PM
To: State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Public Records Request (OH-SEN-24-1615)

Dear Public Records Officer:

Please find attached a request for records under Ohio's Public Records Act.

Sincerely,
Dylan Winters
Paralegal | American Oversight
records@americanoversight.org |
www.americanoversight.org | @weareoversight

PRR: OH-SEN-24-1615

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 11:41 AM
To: 'theresagavarone@gmail.com'
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

From: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 11:02 AM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 10:55 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

[View this email in your browser](#)



Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

COLUMBUS—The Ohio Senate passed two pieces of legislation today during the special session called by Governor DeWine, one closing a foreign contribution loophole for issue campaigns, and one putting President Joe Biden on the November ballot. The foreign contribution ban was championed by State Senator [Theresa Gavarone](#) (R-Bowling Green) and State Senator [Rob McColley](#) (R-Napoleon).

[House Bill 1](#) extends the current law banning foreign contributions to candidates running for office by eliminating the loophole allowing foreign donations to ballot issue

campaigns.

"Ohio's elections are meant for Ohioans, not foreign billionaires who wish to exert their influence on our state. Everyone regardless of party affiliation should agree on this basic tenet in order to protect our elections from outside interests," said Gavarone. "Today, the Senate succeeded in its mission, and I look forward to the Governor signing this bill into law."

[Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place (or legislation pending) to prohibit foreign contributions to ballot initiative campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in the U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives campaigns.

"It's imperative we protect our democratic republic from foreign influence, and at its core, this should be an issue where we all find common ground," McColley said. "Our efforts will close this loophole in Ohio's law to better protect Ohio's elections from foreign nationals hiding behind dark money entities."

The Senate also passed [House Bill 2](#) to extend a November ballot deadline so Democrats can certify Joe Biden as their nominee for President, as requested by the Governor.

Both House Bill 1 and House Bill 2 now go to the Governor's desk for his signature.

###

Senator Theresa Gavarone represents the 2nd District in the Ohio Senate, which encompasses all of Wood, Ottawa and most or parts of Lucas, Erie and Huron Counties. Learn more at www.OhioSenate.gov/Gavarone.

For a high resolution photo of Senator Gavarone, [click here](#).

Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso
Senate Majority Communications
Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 11:02 AM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 10:55 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Bills Closing Foreign Money Loophole and Putting Biden on Ballot

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For a high resolution photo of Senator Gavarone, [click here](#).

Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



[unsubscribe from this list](#)

MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Adam Kuckuk <adam.kuckuk@ncsl.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 5:06 PM
To: Parrott, Sean; State Senator Theresa Gavarone
Cc: Ben Williams
Subject: RE: NCSL interview request - foreign influence on elections

Thank you, Sean. This is helpful. Once I finish writing the article – probably sometime next week - I will send it to you and Senator Gavarone before publishing.

Best,
Adam

From: Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 1:32 PM
To: Adam Kuckuk <adam.kuckuk@ncsl.org>; Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov
Cc: Ben Williams <Ben.Williams@ncsl.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: NCSL interview request - foreign influence on elections

Mimecast Attachment Protection has deemed this file to be safe, but always exercise caution when opening files.

Hey Adam,

Senator Gavarone let me know you were looking for an Ohio Elections Commission Advisory Opinion on foreign nationals ballot issue contributions, which I have attached to this email.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)
513-739-8295 (Cell)

From: Adam Kuckuk <adam.kuckuk@ncsl.org>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>; State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Cc: Ben Williams <Ben.Williams@ncsl.org>
Subject: RE: NCSL interview request - foreign influence on elections

Hi Sean,

Thank you for the quick response. If Senator Gavarone can do teams that would be great, otherwise over the phone will work. I can send an invite, and I'm also going to add my supervisor Ben Williams to the call if that's ok.

Thanks,
Adam

From: Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 9:56 AM
To: Adam Kuckuk <adam.kuckuk@ncsl.org>; Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: NCSL interview request - foreign influence on elections

Hi Adam,

Thank you for reaching out. Senator Gavarone could do 2:00pm CT on Tuesday. Would this be over the phone or through Zoom/Teams?

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)
513-739-8295 (Cell)

From: Adam Kuckuk <adam.kuckuk@ncsl.org>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 11:11 AM
To: State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Cc: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: NCSL interview request - foreign influence on elections

Hello Senator Gavarone,

My name is Adam Kuckuk and I am a policy associate with NCSL's elections program. I'm currently working on an article for NCSL's State Legislative News about foreign influence in elections – primarily about the campaign finance side of things – and would like to get a legislator's perspective. I saw that you introduced [SB 215](#) which prohibits foreign nationals from making certain political contributions. I'm wondering if you are interested in having a 15-minute conversation for the article about the bill and your thoughts on foreign influence in elections generally. Some questions I have are:

- How did you become aware of the issue of foreign contributions in campaigns?
- What inspired you to introduce the bill?
- Do you see foreign influence in elections as a bipartisan issue?
- Are there other things you would like to do about foreign influence in elections?

If you are interested, please let me know. If so, here are a few time ranges that work for me over the next week:

- **Monday, May 13:** 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM CT
- **Tuesday, May 14:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CT
- **Friday, May 17:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CT

If there is another time that works for you or if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out. I'm looking forward to your response.

Best,

Adam Kuckuk

National Conference of State Legislatures
Policy Associate | Elections and Redistricting
(o) 303.856.1343 | (m) 720.713.0355



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Cox, William

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 11:20 AM
To: Vike, Brett; Parrott, Sean
Subject: Re: Meeting request - AFP Ohio
Attachments: EXTERNAL - AFP 215 concerns 3.25.24.pdf

Hi Brett and Sean,

Thanks for getting us on the books for the 9th at 3pm. I've attached a document outlining concerns we have with SB 215, which will be the primary focus of our conversation.

Thanks so much!

Hannah Kubbins
Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 10:52 AM
To: Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>, Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Re: Meeting request - AFP Ohio

Hey Brett,

Looping in Sean here, too.

The 9th we could do anytime from noon-3:30pm and on the 10th 9am-3pm. The 24th and 25th are pretty open on our end.

Hannah Kubbins
Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

From: Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 4:31 PM
To: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Subject: RE: Meeting request - AFP Ohio

Hi Hannah,

Senator Gavarone will be in Columbus on April 9-10th, as well as April 23-24th. Do either of these dates work best for you?

Best,

Brett Vike
Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 9:42 AM
To: Vike, Brett <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>
Cc: Donovan O'Neil <doneil@afphq.org>
Subject: Meeting request - AFP Ohio

Good morning, Brett,

I hope you're doing well! Is it possible to get some time on Sen. Gavarone's calendar in the next two weeks? There are significant concerns from our national team and our Ohio team about the language that was amended into SB 215 on the day it was passed out of the Senate and would appreciate some time to discuss further. Sen. McColley had a conversation with our legal team already and we want to make sure Sen. Gavarone is looped in.

Let me know if there's a good time for us to stop by. Thanks so much!

Hannah Kubbins
Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

- The creation of “Alternative political organization” in Section 26(a) on page 11-12 is the big problem. All the other problems stem from this, but this effectively makes all c4s and c6s (and potentially some c3s) regulated as political committees in OH. I’m going to point to some of the specific bad language about how they are regulating these groups below, but fixing those doesn’t get at the more fundamental problem of this definition. It is also likely unconstitutionally broad – disclosure laws must be “narrowly tailored to the government’s asserted interest.” This covers way more groups and way more speech than that.
 - Sec. 3517.121 on page 40 spells out what an APO has to do. An alternative way to fix the bill would be to define all groups as APOs and then strip down this section. In particular, B(1) is the generalized donor disclosure provision. If this were changed to require disclosure like the federal standard – when the contribution is “for the purpose of” the expenditure, then this would be an alternative fix. You could accomplish this by either changing b(1) to not treat them as political contributing entities or by changing b(2)(b) to not require generalized disclosure if they fail to set up the SSF
 - Sec. 3517.121 B(2) attempts to set up a “separate segregated account” where groups could fundraise into and spend out of a special account. But it’s incredibly narrow and would seriously hinder national groups like AFP. This is then made worse by provision B(2)(b) which considers all moneys into groups that don’t set up these accounts as contributions, regardless of whether they are “made or received for the purpose of influencing the results of an election.” This is even broader than the state’s standard contribution definition. Striking this is a potential help to avoid general donor disclosure.
 - This SSF also literally forces organizations to solicit specifically for political activity who, like AFP, otherwise do not and whose donors have zero influence and control over its political activities.
 - Sec 3517.121 C(1) is the “state you get no foreign money” provision. It is currently illegal to use foreign funds in OH. But because money is fungible and both the definition of contribution and of APO are so broad it’s likely you’d accidentally capture groups that could not say whether “anything of value” came “from a foreign national, directly or indirectly.” No treasurer could possibly honestly attest to no “indirect” foreign money. If they were to go back to only covering ballot committees or otherwise super-narrowing their definitions, this provision would be ok. Narrowing here means both the definition of contribution and the removal of “indirect” foreign money
 - The other sections are prohibitions on foreign national funding and punishments. These would be fine if everything else wasn’t so broad as to undoubtedly capture unknowing or unavoidable violations.
 - The OH Ethics Commission has made clear since 2021 that Foreign Nationals may not give to ballot measure committees in OH. 2021-elc-05.

Cox, William

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 2:09 PM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: Re: Meeting request - AFP Ohio
Attachments: EXTERNAL - AFP 215 concerns 3.25.24.pdf

Hey Sean,

Great, let me know what could work.

I've attached a document we put together that addresses our concerns. Let me know if you need anything else from me in the meantime.

Hannah Kubbins
Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

From: Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 1:14 PM
To: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Subject: RE: Meeting request - AFP Ohio

Hey Hannah,

Could be some availability next week for a meeting. We will circle back with you within the next couple of days to see if we can get it on the calendar.

Would you be able to share the concerns that were raised in regards to the language that was amended into the bill?

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)
513-739-8295 (Cell)

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 12:51 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: Meeting request - AFP Ohio

Hey Sean,

Forwarding this meeting request I sent to Brett last week. My apologies, I should have cc'd you on the initial message.

Let me know if there's time for us to get on the calendar to discuss SB 215.

Thanks!

Hannah Kubbins
Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

From: Hannah Kubbins <HKubbins@afphq.org>
Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 9:41 AM
To: Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>
Cc: Donovan O'Neil <doneil@afphq.org>
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Let me know if there's a good time for us to stop by. Thanks so much!

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Legislative Director
Americans for Prosperity – Ohio
hkubbins@afphq.org
614-905-2551 (office)
740-877-7390 (cell)

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 - The OH Ethics Commission has made clear since 2021 that Foreign Nationals may not give to ballot measure committees in OH. 2021-elc-05.

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 9:42 AM
To: 'Shehy, Stephan'
Subject: SB 215 Amendment
Attachments: sb215in_am1720-4.pdf

Hey Stephan,

Attached is the SB 215 amendment.

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

S. B. No. 215
As Introduced

_____ moved to amend as follows:

In line 2 of the title, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155"; after "3517.992" insert "and to enact section 3517.121" 1
2

In line 7, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155"; after "3517.992" insert "be amended and section 3517.121"; delete "amended" and insert "enacted" 3
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In line 297, strike through "'Political" and insert "Federal political" 6
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In line 298, strike through "3517.1011" and insert "3517.107" 8

In line 308, strike through "(26)" and insert "(26) (a) "Alternative political organization" means a continuing association, corporation, labor organization, or other person, other than an individual, that makes contributions or expenditures and that is not a campaign committee, political party, legislative campaign fund, designated state campaign committee, state candidate fund, federal political committee, separate segregated fund, political action committee, or political contributing entity." 9
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(b) A person described in division (C) (26) (a) of this 17
section that makes contributions or expenditures that are 18
prohibited under section 3599.03 or another provision of the 19
Revised Code nonetheless is considered an alternative political 20
organization. 21

(c) "Alternative political organization" does not include 22
a partnership or other unincorporated business that makes a 23
contribution as described in division (I) of section 3517.10 of 24
the Revised Code. 25

(27)" 26

After line 1122, insert: 27

"Sec. 3517.121. (A) Before receiving a contribution, as 28
defined in section 3517.01 of the Revised Code, or making an 29
expenditure on or after the effective date of this section, 30
every alternative political organization shall appoint a 31
treasurer and shall file a designation of that appointment under 32
division (D) (1) of section 3517.10 of the Revised Code as though 33
the alternative political organization were a political 34
contributing entity. The form of the designation shall indicate 35
that the filer is an alternative political organization. 36

(B) (1) Except as otherwise provided in division (C) of 37
this section, an alternative political organization shall file 38
statements of contributions and expenditures under section 39
3517.10 of the Revised Code as though it were a political 40
contributing entity and shall be deemed to be a political 41
contributing entity for all purposes under this chapter. 42

(2) For purposes of an alternative political organization 43
reporting contributions received by the alternative political 44
organization as required by division (B) (1) of this section: 45

(a) "Contribution" has the meaning defined in section 3517.01 of the Revised Code if the alternative political organization does all of the following: 46
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(i) Deposits in a separate account from its general funds all loans, gifts, deposits, donations, advances, payments, or transfers of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that are made to or received by the alternative political organization for the purpose of influencing the results of an election; 49
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(ii) Does not transfer to that separate account any other loans, gifts, deposits, donations, advances, payments, or transfers of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that are made to or received by the alternative political organization; 58
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(iii) Makes contributions and expenditures only from that separate account. 66
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(b) If an alternative political organization does not follow the procedure described in division (B)(2)(a) of this section, then any loan, gift, deposit, forgiveness of indebtedness, donation, advance, payment, or transfer of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that 68
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is made to or received by the alternative political organization 76
is considered a contribution, regardless of whether it is made 77
or received for the purpose of influencing the results of an 78
election. 79

(C) (1) Upon filing a designation of appointment of a 80
treasurer under division (A) of this section or upon filing a 81
report of contributions and expenditures under division (B) of 82
this section, an alternative political organization may file a 83
certificate attesting that the alternative political 84
organization has not accepted, and will not accept, anything of 85
value from a foreign national, directly or indirectly, in the 86
form of a contribution or for any other purpose. The certificate 87
shall be on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and 88
shall be signed under penalty of election falsification. Except 89
as otherwise provided in division (C) (2) of this section, an 90
alternative political organization that files a certificate 91
under this division is no longer subject to the requirements of 92
division (B) of this section. 93

(2) If, after filing a certificate under division (C) (1) 94
of this section, an alternative political organization accepts 95
anything of value from a foreign national, directly or 96
indirectly, in the form of a contribution or for any other 97
purpose, the certificate is void. Thereafter, the alternative 98
political organization is subject to the requirements of 99
division (B) of this section. On the first statement of 100
contributions and expenditures the alternative political 101
organization is required to file after the certificate is void, 102
the alternative political organization shall report all 103
contributions received and expenditures made from the time the 104
alternative political organization filed its designation of 105
appointment of a treasurer under division (A) of this section or 106

from the close of business on the last day reflected in its last 107
previously filed statement of contributions and expenditures, as 108
applicable. 109

(3) As used in division (D) of this section, "foreign 110
national" has the same meaning as in division (W) of section 111
3517.13 of the Revised Code." 112

In line 1148, strike through "or" and insert ","; after "3517.107"
insert ", or 3517.121" 113
114

In line 1459, delete "continuing association, corporation, or labor" 115

In line 1460, delete "organization" and insert "federal political 116
committee, or alternative political organization"; delete ", directly or 117
indirectly through another" 118

In line 1461, delete "person or entity," and insert "do either of 119
the following:" 120

(a) Transfer funds, or accept a transfer of funds, 121
directly or indirectly into an account from which the person 122
makes contributions or expenditures from an account that is 123
controlled by the person or by the person's affiliate and that, 124
at any time, has contained funds received directly or indirectly 125
from a foreign national. For purposes of this division, a person 126
is affiliated with another person if they are both established, 127
financed, maintained, or controlled by, or if they are, the same 128
corporation, organization, labor organization, or other person, 129
including any parent, subsidiary, division, or department of 130
that corporation, organization, labor organization, or other 131
person. 132

(b) Otherwise" 133

In line 1462, after "expenditure" insert ", directly or indirectly" 134

<u>through another person,"</u>	135
After line 1536, insert:	136
"Sec. 3517.155. (A) (1) Except as otherwise provided in	137
division (B) of this section, the Ohio elections commission	138
shall hold its first hearing on a complaint filed with it, other	139
than a complaint that receives an expedited hearing under	140
section 3517.156 of the Revised Code, not later than ninety	141
business days after the complaint is filed unless the commission	142
has good cause to hold the hearing after that time, in which	143
case it shall hold the hearing not later than one hundred eighty	144
business days after the complaint is filed. At the hearing, the	145
commission shall determine whether or not the failure to act or	146
the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred and shall do	147
only one of the following, except as otherwise provided in	148
division (B) of this section or in division (B) of section	149
3517.151 of the Revised Code:	150
(a) Enter a finding that good cause has been shown not to	151
impose a fine or not to refer the matter to the appropriate	152
prosecutor;	153
(b) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised	154
Code;	155
(c) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor + .	156
(2) As used in division (A) of this section, "appropriate	157
prosecutor" means a prosecutor as defined in section 2935.01 of	158
the Revised Code and either of the following:	159
(a) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation	160
of law involving a campaign committee or the committee's	161
candidate, a political party, a legislative campaign fund, a	162

political action committee, or a political contributing entity, 163
that is required to file a statement of contributions and 164
expenditures with the secretary of state under division (A) of 165
section 3517.11 of the Revised Code, the prosecutor of Franklin 166
county; 167

(b) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation 168
of law involving any other campaign committee or committee's 169
candidate, or any other political party, political action 170
committee, or political contributing entity either of the 171
following as determined by the commission: 172

(i) The prosecutor of Franklin county; 173

(ii) The prosecutor of the county in which the candidacy 174
or ballot question or issue is submitted to the electors or, if 175
it is submitted in more than one county, the most populous of 176
those counties. 177

(B) If the commission decides that the evidence is 178
insufficient for it to determine whether or not the failure to 179
act or the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred, the 180
commission, by the affirmative vote of five members, may request 181
that an investigatory attorney investigate the complaint. Upon 182
that request, an investigatory attorney shall make an 183
investigation in order to produce sufficient evidence for the 184
commission to decide the matter. If the commission requests an 185
investigation under this division, for good cause shown by the 186
investigatory attorney, the commission may extend by sixty days 187
the deadline for holding its first hearing on the complaint as 188
required in division (A) of this section. 189

(C) The commission shall take one of the actions required 190
under division (A) of this section not later than thirty days 191

after the close of all the evidence presented. 192

(D) (1) The commission shall make any finding of a failure 193
to comply with or a violation of law in regard to a complaint 194
that alleges a violation of division (A) or (B) of section 195
3517.21, or division (A) or (B) of section 3517.22 of the 196
Revised Code by clear and convincing evidence. The commission 197
shall make any finding of a failure to comply with or a 198
violation of law in regard to any other complaint by a 199
preponderance of the evidence. 200

(2) If the commission finds a violation of division (B) of 201
section 3517.21 or division (B) of section 3517.22 of the 202
Revised Code, it shall refer the matter to the appropriate 203
prosecutor under division (A) (1) (c) of this section and shall 204
not impose a fine under division (A) (1) (b) of this section or 205
section 3517.993 of the Revised Code. 206

(3) (a) If the commission finds a violation of division (W) 207
of section 3517.13 of the Revised Code, it shall do one of the 208
following: 209

(i) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised 210
Code in an amount equal to three times the amount involved in 211
the violation or ten thousand dollars, whichever amount is 212
greater, with none of the fine suspended and, in the case of a 213
violation of division (W) (2) of section 3517.13 of the Revised 214
Code, order the violator to return an amount equal to any amount 215
accepted in violation of that division to the foreign national 216
from whom it was accepted; 217

(ii) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor or to 218
the attorney general. 219

(b) If the commission finds a violation of division (W) of 220

section 3517.13 of the Revised Code and refers the matter for 221
prosecution, the attorney general may prosecute the violation 222
with all the rights, privileges, and powers conferred by law on 223
prosecuting attorneys, including the power to appear before 224
grand juries and to interrogate witnesses before such grand 225
juries, under any of the following circumstances: 226

(i) Upon the commission's referral of the matter to the 227
attorney general; 228

(ii) Upon the request of the prosecutor to whom the 229
commission refers the matter; 230

(iii) Upon the attorney general's own initiative. 231

These powers of the attorney general are in addition to 232
any other applicable powers of the attorney general. 233

(E) In an action before the commission or a panel of the 234
commission, if the allegations of the complainant are not 235
proved, and the commission takes the action described in 236
division (A) (1) (a) of this section or a panel of the commission 237
takes the action described in division (C) (1) of section 238
3517.156 of the Revised Code, the commission or a panel of the 239
commission may find that the complaint is frivolous, and, if the 240
commission or panel so finds, the commission shall order the 241
complainant to pay reasonable attorney's fees and to pay the 242
costs of the commission or panel as determined by a majority of 243
the members of the commission. The costs paid to the commission 244
or panel under this division shall be deposited into the Ohio 245
elections commission fund." 246

In line 1805, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155" 247

The motion was _____ agreed to.

<u>SYNOPSIS</u>	248
Continuing associations and corporations	249
R.C. 3517.01(C)(26), 3517.121, 3517.13(W), and 3517.155	250
Creates a new category of "alternative political organization" (APO) that includes a continuing association,	251
corporation, labor organization, or other person, other than an	252
individual, that makes contributions or expenditures and that is	253
not already a regulated Ohio political entity or a federal	254
political committee or separate segregated fund.	255
	256
Requires every APO, before receiving a contribution or	257
making an expenditure on or after the bill's effective date, to	258
file a designation of treasurer.	259
Requires generally that an APO be treated the same as a	260
political contributing entity (PCE) and report the same	261
information concerning its contributors as is currently required	262
for PCEs and other regulated political entities.	263
Expands the definition of a contribution when it is made	264
to an APO, for purposes of disclosing its contributions, in	265
order to require the APO to report the source of all donations	266
if the APO uses its general fund to make expenditures.	267
Exempts an APO from being treated as a PCE and from being	268
required to disclose its donors if it certifies under penalty of	269
election falsification that it has not accepted, and will not	270
accept, anything of value from a foreign national, directly or	271
indirectly, in the form of a contribution or for any other	272

purpose.	273
Specifies that if the APO accepts anything of value from a foreign national, the certificate is void and the APO is to be treated as a PCE and required to disclose its contributors.	274 275 276
Adds an explicit prohibition against a political entity transferring funds into its campaign account from any account controlled by the entity or its affiliate that, at any time, has contained funds received directly or indirectly from a foreign national.	277 278 279 280 281
Requires the Ohio Elections Commission, if it finds a violation of the law regarding campaign spending by foreign nationals, to either:	282 283 284
- Impose the maximum fine and, if applicable, require the money to be returned to the foreign national; or	285 286
- Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor.	287
Allows the Attorney General to prosecute a violation of that law if the Commission refers the matter for prosecution.	288 289

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 10:26 AM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

No problem! I will communicate with Kara on the McColley release so we send it out at a similar time. Thanks!

Theresea Varrasso
Deputy Press Secretary
Ohio Senate Majority Caucus
Office: 614-644-9559
Cell: 740-644-0424

From: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 10:21 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Good morning Theresea,

That's fine to remove the highlighted portion.

Thanks for all your help!

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 10:13 AM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Good morning Sean!

We received the McColley quote last night. He also wanted the highlighted portion removed, so figured I would ask if she wanted it to be exact joint releases.

I also removed any mention of "today" since it is now Thursday.

Thanks!

Theresea Varrasso
Deputy Press Secretary
Ohio Senate Majority Caucus
Office: 614-644-9559
Cell: 740-644-0424

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 10:06 AM

To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>

Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

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ballot issues. Senate 215 also includes enforcement mechanisms for these organizations.

"Senate Bill 215 protects issue campaigns against foreign influence just like it protects candidate races," Gavarone said. "This should be an issue with bipartisan agreement. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats chose to side with the interests of foreign nationals instead of Ohioans."

Nearly [80% of voters](#) favor a ban on foreign individuals and entities funding ballot initiatives, and the support for such a ban is strong among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. [Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place or legislation pending to prohibit foreign contributions to these campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives.

"Our founding fathers were deeply concerned about foreign influence in our democratic process," McColley said. "No matter what side of the aisle you are on, we should all agree that foreign nationals should not be interfering with our elections."

Senate Bill 215 will now go to the Ohio House of Representatives. Learn more about the legislation from Senator Gavarone's column in [On the Record](#) and on the [President's Podcast](#).

###

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Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:37 PM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Can I add the last sentence below back in? Kara and John edit.

From: Cunningham, Kara <Kara.Cunningham@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:37 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Just kidding : see this rendition

"Senate Bill 215 protects issue campaigns against foreign influence just like it protects candidate races", Gavarone said. "This should be an issue with bipartisan agreement. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats chose to side with the interests of foreign nationals instead of Ohioans. Every Ohioan deserves to know their elections are for them, not foreign nationals who want to fund a certain outcome."

From: Cunningham, Kara
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:36 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Confirming you are going to use her quote in addition as seen below:

"Senate Bill 215 protects issue campaigns against foreign influence just like it protects candidate races", Gavarone said. "This should be an issue with bipartisan agreement. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats chose to side with the interests of foreign nationals instead of Ohioans. Every Ohioan deserves to know their elections are for them, not foreign nationals who want a certain outcome."

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:30 PM
To: Cunningham, Kara <Kara.Cunningham@ohiosenate.gov>; Fortney, John <John.Fortney@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

From: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:29 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

For her quote;

“SB 215 protects ballot issue campaigns against foreign influence just like it protects candidate races”, Gavarone said. “This should be an issue with bipartisan agreement. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats chose to side with the interests of foreign nationals instead of Ohioans.”

From: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:44 PM

To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>

Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

[Updated to better explain the APOs. Let me know her edits!](#)

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:12 PM

To: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>

Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

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"Our founding fathers were deeply concerned about foreign influence in our democratic process," McColley said. "Senate Bill 215 addresses this issue in an effective and efficient way so Ohio's elections can be determined by Ohio voters."

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Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:35 PM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 4:34 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

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Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 3:39 PM
To: 'theresagavarone@gmail.com'
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

From: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:44 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

[Updated to better explain the APOs. Let me know her edits!](#)

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:12 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

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Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 12:22 PM
To: 'theresagavarone@gmail.com'
Subject: SB 215 floor speech
Attachments: SB 215 Floor Speech.docx

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

Mr. President,

Thank you for an opportunity to talk about Senate Bill 215 today.

This legislation is quite simple, it prevents foreign interests from participating directly or indirectly, in ballot issues. Both Ohio and federal law already prohibit foreign interests from participating in candidate races, but currently leaves the door open for ballot issues elections. We want to shut that door and stop the foreign interference in all of our elections.

Why should Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss be able to contribute a quarter of a billion dollars to American elections, including right here in Ohio? We heard testimony in committee quoting the Swiss billionaire's sister. She outlined in her book Wyss' goal is to "re-interpret the American Constitution in the light of progressive politics." A foreign national, a non-US citizen wants to reinterpret the American constitution. Let that sink in.

This campaign-finance reform measure will ensure that all of Ohio's elections are not impacted by foreign influences, whether it's a candidate or ballot initiative

and this will better protect Ohio's elections from foreign interests hiding behind "dark money" entities like 501(C)(4)s.

We don't often have issues this black and white before us. A yes vote is a vote to keep foreign influence out of our ballot issues, the same way we do in our elections to select our representatives. A no vote is an unmistakable message to Ohioans that allowing foreign billionaires, the communists in China and Russia, and countries like Iran and North Korea to meddle in our elections is not only acceptable, but – a no vote says for them even encouraged.

By passing SB 215, we can better protect Ohio's elections from foreign influences and ensure the integrity of our democratic process. I urge my colleagues to support this important campaign-finance reform measure, and I encourage a 'yes' vote.

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 9:23 AM
To: 'theresagavarone@gmail.com'
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 9:11 AM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

Hello Sean,

Post blessing from Will on your amendment, I have a release for her review. I am working with Kara on the McColley quote to be sure he is good with it; since she is new, I will be walking her through this process with his office today. If you cannot reach me, text me! Edit away!

Theresea Varrasso
Deputy Press Secretary
Ohio Senate Majority Caucus
Office: 614-644-9559
Cell: 740-644-0424

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 8:05 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Senate Passes Gavarone, McColley Bill Banning Foreign Contributions for Issue Campaigns

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Senate Bill 215 extends the current law banning foreign contributions to candidates running for office, eliminating the loophole for ballot issue campaigns. The bill creates an alternative political organization that must file contributions if they receive foreign dollars and separate those funds to ensure foreign money is not used towards Ohio candidates and ballot issues. Senate 215 also includes

enforcement mechanisms for these organizations.

"Senate Bill 215 protects ballot issue campaigns against foreign influence," Gavarone said. "This is a bipartisan issue and an idea everyone from any background or political party can support. All Ohioans deserve to know their elections are for them, not foreign nationals who want a certain outcome."

Nearly [80% of voters](#) favor a ban on foreign individuals and entities funding ballot initiatives, and the support for such a ban is strong among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. [Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place or legislation pending to prohibit foreign contributions to these campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives.

"Our founding fathers were deeply concerned about foreign influence in our democratic process," McColley said. "Senate Bill 215 addresses this issue in an effective and efficient way so Ohio's elections can be determined by Ohio voters."

Senate Bill 215 will now go to the Ohio House of Representatives. Learn more about the legislation from Senator Gavarone's column in [On the Record](#) and on the [President's Podcast](#).

###

Senator Theresa Gavarone represents the 2nd District in the Ohio Senate, which encompasses all of Wood, Ottawa and most or parts of Lucas, Erie and Huron Counties. Learn more at www.OhioSenate.gov/Gavarone.

For a high resolution photo of Senator Gavarone, [click here](#).

Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresea Varrasso
Senate Majority Communications

[unsubscribe from this list](#)

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 3:42 PM
To: 'Heather Plahuta'
Subject: SB 215 Amendment
Attachments: sb215in_am1720-4.pdf

Hi Heather,

Attached is the amendment being offered today in General Government for SB 215.

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)
513-739-8295 (Cell)

S. B. No. 215
As Introduced

_____ moved to amend as follows:

In line 2 of the title, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155"; after "3517.992" insert "and to enact section 3517.121" 1
2

In line 7, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155"; after "3517.992" insert "be amended and section 3517.121"; delete "amended" and insert "enacted" 3
4
5

In line 297, strike through "'Political" and insert "'Federal political" 6
7

In line 298, strike through "3517.1011" and insert "3517.107" 8

In line 308, strike through "(26)" and insert "(26) (a) "Alternative political organization" means a continuing association, corporation, labor organization, or other person, other than an individual, that makes contributions or expenditures and that is not a campaign committee, political party, legislative campaign fund, designated state campaign committee, state candidate fund, federal political committee, separate segregated fund, political action committee, or political contributing entity." 9
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(b) A person described in division (C) (26) (a) of this 17
section that makes contributions or expenditures that are 18
prohibited under section 3599.03 or another provision of the 19
Revised Code nonetheless is considered an alternative political 20
organization. 21

(c) "Alternative political organization" does not include 22
a partnership or other unincorporated business that makes a 23
contribution as described in division (I) of section 3517.10 of 24
the Revised Code. 25

(27)" 26

After line 1122, insert: 27

"Sec. 3517.121. (A) Before receiving a contribution, as 28
defined in section 3517.01 of the Revised Code, or making an 29
expenditure on or after the effective date of this section, 30
every alternative political organization shall appoint a 31
treasurer and shall file a designation of that appointment under 32
division (D) (1) of section 3517.10 of the Revised Code as though 33
the alternative political organization were a political 34
contributing entity. The form of the designation shall indicate 35
that the filer is an alternative political organization. 36

(B) (1) Except as otherwise provided in division (C) of 37
this section, an alternative political organization shall file 38
statements of contributions and expenditures under section 39
3517.10 of the Revised Code as though it were a political 40
contributing entity and shall be deemed to be a political 41
contributing entity for all purposes under this chapter. 42

(2) For purposes of an alternative political organization 43
reporting contributions received by the alternative political 44
organization as required by division (B) (1) of this section: 45

(a) "Contribution" has the meaning defined in section 3517.01 of the Revised Code if the alternative political organization does all of the following: 46
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(i) Deposits in a separate account from its general funds all loans, gifts, deposits, donations, advances, payments, or transfers of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that are made to or received by the alternative political organization for the purpose of influencing the results of an election; 49
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(ii) Does not transfer to that separate account any other loans, gifts, deposits, donations, advances, payments, or transfers of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that are made to or received by the alternative political organization; 58
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(iii) Makes contributions and expenditures only from that separate account. 66
67

(b) If an alternative political organization does not follow the procedure described in division (B)(2)(a) of this section, then any loan, gift, deposit, forgiveness of indebtedness, donation, advance, payment, or transfer of funds or anything of value, including a transfer of funds from an inter vivos or testamentary trust or decedent's estate and the payment by any person other than the person to whom the services are rendered for the personal services of another person, that 68
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is made to or received by the alternative political organization 76
is considered a contribution, regardless of whether it is made 77
or received for the purpose of influencing the results of an 78
election. 79

(C) (1) Upon filing a designation of appointment of a 80
treasurer under division (A) of this section or upon filing a 81
report of contributions and expenditures under division (B) of 82
this section, an alternative political organization may file a 83
certificate attesting that the alternative political 84
organization has not accepted, and will not accept, anything of 85
value from a foreign national, directly or indirectly, in the 86
form of a contribution or for any other purpose. The certificate 87
shall be on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and 88
shall be signed under penalty of election falsification. Except 89
as otherwise provided in division (C) (2) of this section, an 90
alternative political organization that files a certificate 91
under this division is no longer subject to the requirements of 92
division (B) of this section. 93

(2) If, after filing a certificate under division (C) (1) 94
of this section, an alternative political organization accepts 95
anything of value from a foreign national, directly or 96
indirectly, in the form of a contribution or for any other 97
purpose, the certificate is void. Thereafter, the alternative 98
political organization is subject to the requirements of 99
division (B) of this section. On the first statement of 100
contributions and expenditures the alternative political 101
organization is required to file after the certificate is void, 102
the alternative political organization shall report all 103
contributions received and expenditures made from the time the 104
alternative political organization filed its designation of 105
appointment of a treasurer under division (A) of this section or 106

from the close of business on the last day reflected in its last 107
previously filed statement of contributions and expenditures, as 108
applicable. 109

(3) As used in division (D) of this section, "foreign 110
national" has the same meaning as in division (W) of section 111
3517.13 of the Revised Code." 112

In line 1148, strike through "or" and insert ","; after "3517.107"
insert ", or 3517.121" 113
114

In line 1459, delete "continuing association, corporation, or labor" 115

In line 1460, delete "organization" and insert "federal political 116
committee, or alternative political organization"; delete ", directly or 117
indirectly through another" 118

In line 1461, delete "person or entity," and insert "do either of 119
the following:" 120

(a) Transfer funds, or accept a transfer of funds, 121
directly or indirectly into an account from which the person 122
makes contributions or expenditures from an account that is 123
controlled by the person or by the person's affiliate and that, 124
at any time, has contained funds received directly or indirectly 125
from a foreign national. For purposes of this division, a person 126
is affiliated with another person if they are both established, 127
financed, maintained, or controlled by, or if they are, the same 128
corporation, organization, labor organization, or other person, 129
including any parent, subsidiary, division, or department of 130
that corporation, organization, labor organization, or other 131
person. 132

(b) Otherwise" 133

In line 1462, after "expenditure" insert ", directly or indirectly" 134

<u>through another person,"</u>	135
After line 1536, insert:	136
"Sec. 3517.155. (A) (1) Except as otherwise provided in	137
division (B) of this section, the Ohio elections commission	138
shall hold its first hearing on a complaint filed with it, other	139
than a complaint that receives an expedited hearing under	140
section 3517.156 of the Revised Code, not later than ninety	141
business days after the complaint is filed unless the commission	142
has good cause to hold the hearing after that time, in which	143
case it shall hold the hearing not later than one hundred eighty	144
business days after the complaint is filed. At the hearing, the	145
commission shall determine whether or not the failure to act or	146
the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred and shall do	147
only one of the following, except as otherwise provided in	148
division (B) of this section or in division (B) of section	149
3517.151 of the Revised Code:	150
(a) Enter a finding that good cause has been shown not to	151
impose a fine or not to refer the matter to the appropriate	152
prosecutor;	153
(b) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised	154
Code;	155
(c) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor + .	156
(2) As used in division (A) of this section, "appropriate	157
prosecutor" means a prosecutor as defined in section 2935.01 of	158
the Revised Code and either of the following:	159
(a) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation	160
of law involving a campaign committee or the committee's	161
candidate, a political party, a legislative campaign fund, a	162

political action committee, or a political contributing entity, 163
that is required to file a statement of contributions and 164
expenditures with the secretary of state under division (A) of 165
section 3517.11 of the Revised Code, the prosecutor of Franklin 166
county; 167

(b) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation 168
of law involving any other campaign committee or committee's 169
candidate, or any other political party, political action 170
committee, or political contributing entity either of the 171
following as determined by the commission: 172

(i) The prosecutor of Franklin county; 173

(ii) The prosecutor of the county in which the candidacy 174
or ballot question or issue is submitted to the electors or, if 175
it is submitted in more than one county, the most populous of 176
those counties. 177

(B) If the commission decides that the evidence is 178
insufficient for it to determine whether or not the failure to 179
act or the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred, the 180
commission, by the affirmative vote of five members, may request 181
that an investigatory attorney investigate the complaint. Upon 182
that request, an investigatory attorney shall make an 183
investigation in order to produce sufficient evidence for the 184
commission to decide the matter. If the commission requests an 185
investigation under this division, for good cause shown by the 186
investigatory attorney, the commission may extend by sixty days 187
the deadline for holding its first hearing on the complaint as 188
required in division (A) of this section. 189

(C) The commission shall take one of the actions required 190
under division (A) of this section not later than thirty days 191

after the close of all the evidence presented. 192

(D) (1) The commission shall make any finding of a failure 193
to comply with or a violation of law in regard to a complaint 194
that alleges a violation of division (A) or (B) of section 195
3517.21, or division (A) or (B) of section 3517.22 of the 196
Revised Code by clear and convincing evidence. The commission 197
shall make any finding of a failure to comply with or a 198
violation of law in regard to any other complaint by a 199
preponderance of the evidence. 200

(2) If the commission finds a violation of division (B) of 201
section 3517.21 or division (B) of section 3517.22 of the 202
Revised Code, it shall refer the matter to the appropriate 203
prosecutor under division (A) (1) (c) of this section and shall 204
not impose a fine under division (A) (1) (b) of this section or 205
section 3517.993 of the Revised Code. 206

(3) (a) If the commission finds a violation of division (W) 207
of section 3517.13 of the Revised Code, it shall do one of the 208
following: 209

(i) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised 210
Code in an amount equal to three times the amount involved in 211
the violation or ten thousand dollars, whichever amount is 212
greater, with none of the fine suspended and, in the case of a 213
violation of division (W) (2) of section 3517.13 of the Revised 214
Code, order the violator to return an amount equal to any amount 215
accepted in violation of that division to the foreign national 216
from whom it was accepted; 217

(ii) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor or to 218
the attorney general. 219

(b) If the commission finds a violation of division (W) of 220

section 3517.13 of the Revised Code and refers the matter for 221
prosecution, the attorney general may prosecute the violation 222
with all the rights, privileges, and powers conferred by law on 223
prosecuting attorneys, including the power to appear before 224
grand juries and to interrogate witnesses before such grand 225
juries, under any of the following circumstances: 226

(i) Upon the commission's referral of the matter to the 227
attorney general; 228

(ii) Upon the request of the prosecutor to whom the 229
commission refers the matter; 230

(iii) Upon the attorney general's own initiative. 231

These powers of the attorney general are in addition to 232
any other applicable powers of the attorney general. 233

(E) In an action before the commission or a panel of the 234
commission, if the allegations of the complainant are not 235
proved, and the commission takes the action described in 236
division (A) (1) (a) of this section or a panel of the commission 237
takes the action described in division (C) (1) of section 238
3517.156 of the Revised Code, the commission or a panel of the 239
commission may find that the complaint is frivolous, and, if the 240
commission or panel so finds, the commission shall order the 241
complainant to pay reasonable attorney's fees and to pay the 242
costs of the commission or panel as determined by a majority of 243
the members of the commission. The costs paid to the commission 244
or panel under this division shall be deposited into the Ohio 245
elections commission fund." 246

In line 1805, after "3517.13" insert ", 3517.155" 247

The motion was _____ agreed to.

<u>SYNOPSIS</u>	248
Continuing associations and corporations	249
R.C. 3517.01(C)(26), 3517.121, 3517.13(W), and 3517.155	250
Creates a new category of "alternative political organization" (APO) that includes a continuing association, corporation, labor organization, or other person, other than an individual, that makes contributions or expenditures and that is not already a regulated Ohio political entity or a federal political committee or separate segregated fund.	256
Requires every APO, before receiving a contribution or making an expenditure on or after the bill's effective date, to file a designation of treasurer.	259
Requires generally that an APO be treated the same as a political contributing entity (PCE) and report the same information concerning its contributors as is currently required for PCEs and other regulated political entities.	263
Expands the definition of a contribution when it is made to an APO, for purposes of disclosing its contributions, in order to require the APO to report the source of all donations if the APO uses its general fund to make expenditures.	267
Exempts an APO from being treated as a PCE and from being required to disclose its donors if it certifies under penalty of election falsification that it has not accepted, and will not accept, anything of value from a foreign national, directly or indirectly, in the form of a contribution or for any other	272

purpose.	273
Specifies that if the APO accepts anything of value from a foreign national, the certificate is void and the APO is to be treated as a PCE and required to disclose its contributors.	274 275 276
Adds an explicit prohibition against a political entity transferring funds into its campaign account from any account controlled by the entity or its affiliate that, at any time, has contained funds received directly or indirectly from a foreign national.	277 278 279 280 281
Requires the Ohio Elections Commission, if it finds a violation of the law regarding campaign spending by foreign nationals, to either:	282 283 284
- Impose the maximum fine and, if applicable, require the money to be returned to the foreign national; or	285 286
- Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor.	287
Allows the Attorney General to prosecute a violation of that law if the Commission refers the matter for prosecution.	288 289

Cox, William

From: State Senator Theresa Gavarone
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 9:32 AM
To: 'knucklehead46@icloud.com'
Subject: RE: Contact Form

Hey Frederick,

Thank you for reaching out to Senator Gavarone. Senator Gavarone always appreciates hearing from constituents who have concerns or opinions about issues that our state and community are facing.

Senator Gavarone is proud to be a sponsor of Senate Bill 215, which prevents foreign interests from participating, directly or indirectly, in ballot issues. Both Ohio and federal law already prohibit foreign interests from participating in candidate races. Therefore, this bill simply closes a campaign finance loophole for issue campaigns. As Senator Gavarone has stated, these are our elections and we will work to keep it that way.

Thanks for your thoughts and please do not hesitate to reach out to Senator Gavarone in the future if you believe she can assist you with any state government-related issues.

Sincerely,

Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
Sign Up Senator Gavarone's Newsletter
<https://linktr.ee/sengavarone>
Follow Senator Gavarone on social media



From: knucklehead46@icloud.com <knucklehead46@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:54 PM
To: State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Contact Form

First Name: Frederick
Last Name: Roe
Email: knucklehead46@icloud.com
Phone: (202) 581-7505

AO Redaction - PII

Subject: Support SB 215 - keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections
Message: Senator Gavarone, My name is Frederick and I live in Walbridge, OH. I'm writing to ask you to support SB 215 and keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections. Foreign interests influencing our elections is

not just a hypothetical problem. Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss has given over \$245 million to the New Venture Fund and the Sixteen Thirty Fund since 2016. The Sixteen Thirty Fund spent over \$12 million on ballot campaigns in Ohio in 2023. SB 215 would: ---Ensure fairness in Ohio's elections by making the law for issue campaigns consistent with Ohio's current law banning foreign national contributions to political candidates running for office. ---Ensure Ohioans' voices are not diluted, and decisions about Ohio's Constitution and laws are based on the voices of its citizens - not foreign billionaires. Please protect Ohio's elections from influence and manipulation by funding from foreign nationals and actors by voting "YES" on SB 215. Thank you,
Frederick Roe

Cox, William

From: State Senator Theresa Gavarone
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 9:32 AM
To: 'w62@aol.com'
Subject: RE: Contact Form

Hey William,

Thank you for reaching out to Senator Gavarone. Senator Gavarone always appreciates hearing from constituents who have concerns or opinions about issues that our state and community are facing.

Senator Gavarone is proud to be a sponsor of Senate Bill 215, which prevents foreign interests from participating, directly or indirectly, in ballot issues. Both Ohio and federal law already prohibit foreign interests from participating in candidate races. Therefore, this bill simply closes a campaign finance loophole for issue campaigns. As Senator Gavarone has stated, these are our elections and we will work to keep it that way.

Thanks for your thoughts and please do not hesitate to reach out to Senator Gavarone in the future if you believe she can assist you with any state government-related issues.

Sincerely,

Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
Sign Up Senator Gavarone's Newsletter
<https://linktr.ee/sengavarone>
Follow Senator Gavarone on social media



From: w62@aol.com <w62@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 7:36 PM
To: State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Contact Form

First Name: William
Last Name: Waldock
Email: w62@aol.com
Phone: (419) 625-0123

AO Redaction - PII
[Redacted]

Subject: Support SB 215 - keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections

Message: Senator Gavarone, My name is William and I live in Sandusky, OH. I'm writing to ask you to support SB 215 and keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections. Foreign interests influencing our elections is not just a

hypothetical problem. Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss has given over \$245 million to the New Venture Fund and the Sixteen Thirty Fund since 2016. The Sixteen Thirty Fund spent over \$12 million on ballot campaigns in Ohio in 2023. SB 215 would: ---Ensure fairness in Ohio's elections by making the law for issue campaigns consistent with Ohio's current law banning foreign national contributions to political candidates running for office. ---Ensure Ohioans' voices are not diluted, and decisions about Ohio's Constitution and laws are based on the voices of its citizens - not foreign billionaires. Please protect Ohio's elections from influence and manipulation by funding from foreign nationals and actors by voting "YES" on SB 215. Thank you, William Waldock

Cox, William

From: State Senator Theresa Gavarone
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 9:30 AM
To: 'trav.b3250@gmail.com'
Subject: RE: Contact Form

Hey Travis,

Thank you for reaching out to Senator Gavarone. Senator Gavarone always appreciates hearing from constituents who have concerns or opinions about issues that our state and community are facing.

Senator Gavarone is proud to be a sponsor Senate Bill 215, which prevents foreign interests from participating, directly or indirectly, in ballot issues. Both Ohio and federal law already prohibit foreign interests from participating in candidate races. Therefore, this bill simply closes a campaign finance loophole for issue campaigns. As Senator Gavarone has stated, these are our elections and we will work to keep it that way.

Thanks for your thoughts and please do not hesitate to reach out to Senator Gavarone in the future if you believe she can assist you with any state government-related issues.

Sincerely,

Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
Sign Up Senator Gavarone's Newsletter
<https://linktr.ee/sengavarone>
Follow Senator Gavarone on social media



From: trav.b3250@gmail.com <trav.b3250@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 5:30 PM
To: State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Contact Form

First Name: Travis
Last Name: Barton
Email: trav.b3250@gmail.com
Phone: (419) 707-4306

AO Redaction - PII
[Redacted]

Subject: Support SB 215 - keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections

Message: Senator Gavarone, My name is Travis and I live in Oak Harbor, OH. I'm writing to ask you to support SB 215 and keep foreign funding out of Ohio's elections. Foreign interests influencing our elections is not just a hypothetical problem. Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss has given over \$245 million to the New Venture Fund and the Sixteen Thirty Fund since 2016. The Sixteen Thirty Fund spent over \$12 million on ballot campaigns in Ohio in 2023. SB 215 would: ---Ensure fairness in Ohio's elections by making the law for issue campaigns consistent with Ohio's current law banning foreign national contributions to political candidates running for office. ---Ensure Ohioans' voices are not diluted, and decisions about Ohio's Constitution and laws are based on the voices of its citizens - not foreign billionaires. Please protect Ohio's elections from influence and manipulation by funding from foreign nationals and actors by voting "YES" on SB 215. Thank you, Travis Barton

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3:16 PM
To: theresagavarone@gmail.com
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

From: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3:16 PM
To: Vike, Brett <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>; Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Hi team,

Brett, as discussed, Senator McColley had a few edits to the release. Most is to his quote but I highlighted the others. If Senator Gavarone would like to incorporate these ideas as well, let me know. If not, I will delete everything in yellow.

Thanks!

Theresa

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3:13 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresa <Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

[View this email in your browser](#)



**Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban
Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns**

COLUMBUS—State Senator [Theresa Gavarone](#) (R-Bowling Green) and State Senator [Rob McColley](#) (R-Napoleon) have introduced Senate Bill 215 to prohibit foreign contributions to ballot issue campaigns. The bill extends the current law banning foreign contributions to candidates running for office, eliminating the loophole for issue campaigns. **The law banning foreign national contributions in Ohio to political candidates has been in effect since 2000.**

"Ohio's elections should be about Ohioans, not foreign individuals, governments, and entities trying to influence our democracy and decisions," Gavarone said. "Senate Bill 215 prevents foreign influence on statewide ballot issue campaigns on both sides of the debate."

"Ohio and other states across the country have seen foreign nationals pour millions of dollars into state issue campaigns under the guise of a tangled web of dark money groups," McColley said. "This legislation preserves and protects these pivotal questions from foreign influence, which was a concern of our founding fathers for the stability and success of our government."

The introduction of SB 215 comes after known dark money group, The 1630 fund, spent over \$13 million dollars on ballot campaigns in Ohio in 2023. The 1630 Fund has received over \$200 million dollars from Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss since 2016, according to an Associated Press article from August 2023.

Nearly [80% of voters](#) favor a ban on foreign individuals and entities funding ballot initiatives, and the support for such a ban is strong among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. [Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place or legislation pending to prohibit foreign contributions to these campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives.

Senate Bill 215 must next be referred to a committee.

###

Senator Theresa Gavarone represents the 2nd District in the Ohio Senate, which encompasses all of Wood, Ottawa and most or parts of Lucas, Erie and Huron Counties. Learn more at www.OhioSenate.gov/Gavarone.

For a high resolution photo of Senator Gavarone, [click here](#).

Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3:15 PM
To: Perretti, Marcella
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks
Attachments: Press Conference Statement 2.docx

Here is Senator Gavarone's remarks.

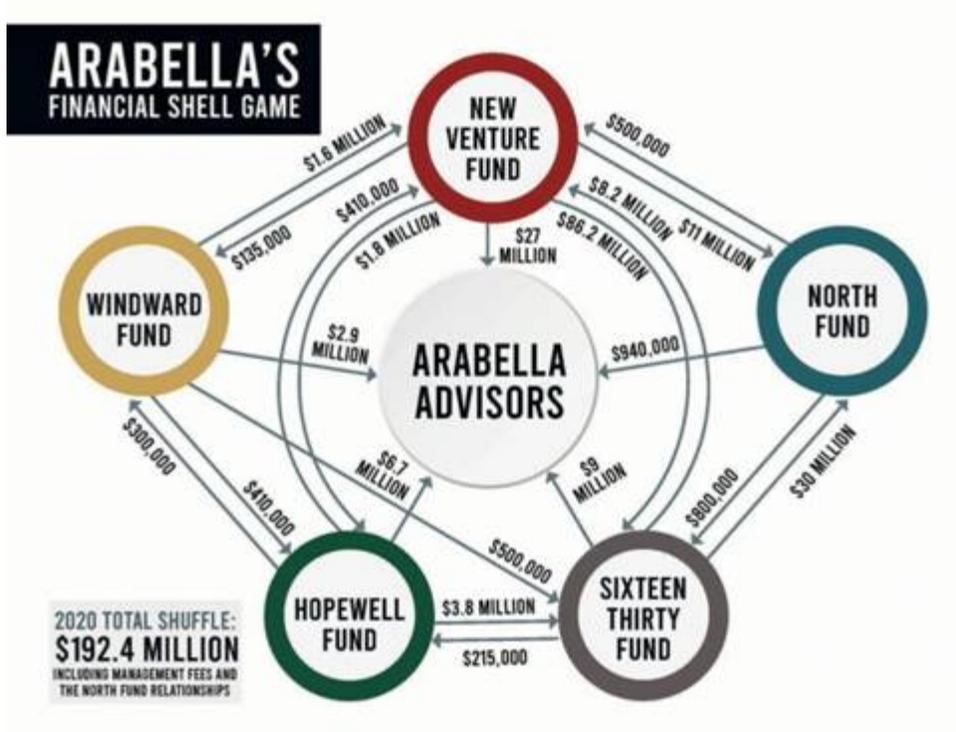
From: Perretti, Marcella <Marcella.Perretti@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:53 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks

Sean,

Here are the updated talking points for SB 215!

As discussed, Senator Gavarone will focus on what the bill does while Senator McColley will focus on the numbers. I have also printed out this chart for Senator McColley. Please feel free to print one for your records. I accessed the chart [here](#).

Best,
Marcella



From: Perretti, Marcella
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:47 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks

Sean,

Attached are some talking points I outlined for Senator McColley-feel free to share with Senator Gavarone. Senator McColley asked me to research these three topics this morning and here is the information I could gather on short notice. We are still waiting on a call back from someone who could potentially have more to add, but here are the talking points for now.

Thank you for sending over your statement- I added the information you found regarding states who have already passed similar legislation and the Maryland poll at the bottom as it relates to HB 119 from the 123rd General Assembly.

Also attached are the numbers we pulled from the August and November election. Based on the numbers that were public, we could argue that roughly 80 million dollars of dark money was pumped into these three issue campaigns; One Person One vote, Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom Pac, and Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights

Should we receive any further information, I will share!

Thank you again times one million!
Marcella

From: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 10:44 AM
To: Perretti, Marcella <Marcella.Perretti@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: Press Conference Remarks

Hey Marcella,

Here is the draft we have been working on. If your boss is going to focus on the money aspect, we would just remove that from this and just focus on the bill itself.

Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

Thank you for being here today.

As most of you all know, improving the integrity and confidence in our elections has been a priority for me since day one. I was proud to author the language in House Bill 458 last year that required a valid photo ID to vote, and most recently enacted, the DATA Act, a first-of-its-kind legislation that created standardized definitions for all 88 County Boards of Elections, providing more transparency into Ohio's elections.

In the 2023 election, money poured into Ohio from every direction. Millions of dollars being spent on campaigns that drastically changed the landscape of Ohio, with significant amounts coming from foreign interests.

Why should we accept this? These are our elections and we will work to keep it that way. That is why we are proud to introduce SB 215, which prevents foreign interests from participating, directly or indirectly, in ballot issues. Both Ohio and federal law already prohibit foreign interests from participating in candidate races. Therefore, this bill simply closes a campaign finance loophole for issue campaigns.

In addition, this legislation retains current law requiring campaigns that accept money from foreign interests to pay a fine equal to 3x the amount accepted or \$10,000, whichever is greater. Strengthens the requirement that the campaign also repay the contribution by making this a mandatory requirement. Current law only requires repayment if the Secretary of State so orders.

Senate Bill 215 also specifies that expenditures made during the signature gathering phase, including expenditures made to defeat or frustrate signature gathering, are subject to the requirements of the bill and cannot be funded by foreign interests.

Lastly, SB 215 ensures that the group working on the ballot initiative is classified as PAC. This ensures these groups comply with the PAC filing requirements. These requirements include ongoing campaign finance disclosures and a new requirement that the PAC treasurer certify that the group has not accepted foreign contributions.

To be clear, this campaign-finance reform measure will ensure that all of Ohio's elections are not impacted by foreign influences and will better protect Ohio's elections from foreign interests hiding behind "dark money" entities like 501(C)(4)s

When I found out that foreign nationals could and actually contributed to ballot issues in Ohio I was outraged. We can't allow foreign influence in our elections. This is not red or blue issue, and we should be able to agree that protecting our elections from foreign influence is the right thing to do.

I thank you again for being here to cover this legislation and we're happy to answer any questions.

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:56 PM
To: Perretti, Marcella
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks

Marcella,

Perfect! We have updated her remarks.

Thanks!

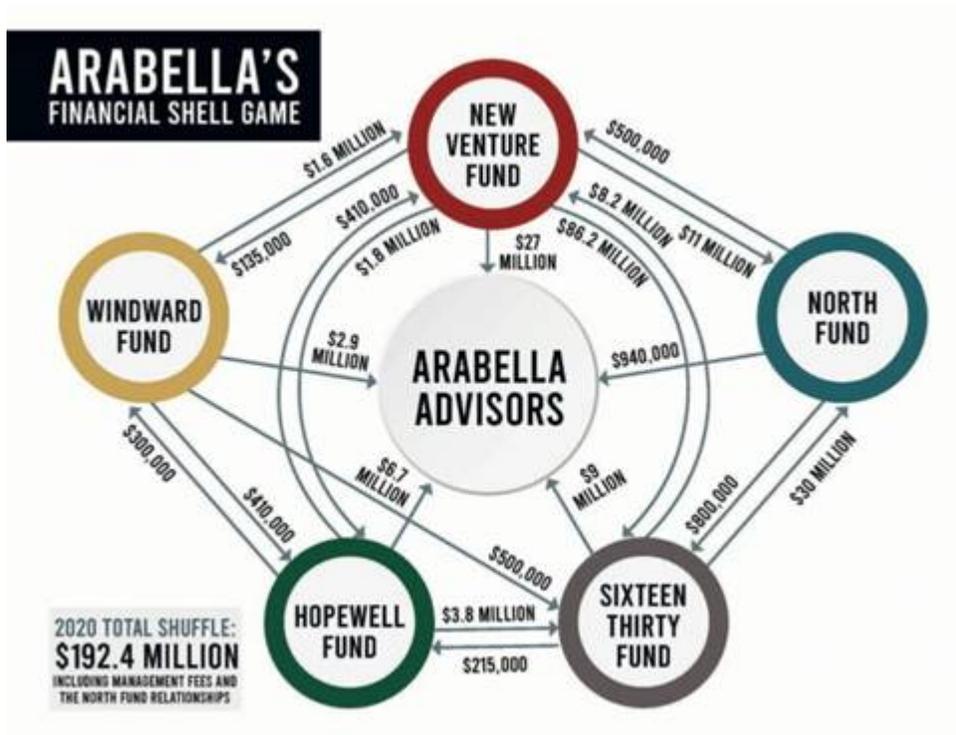
From: Perretti, Marcella <Marcella.Perretti@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:53 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks

Sean,

Here are the updated talking points for SB 215!

As discussed, Senator Gavarone will focus on what the bill does while Senator McColley will focus on the numbers. I have also printed out this chart for Senator McColley. Please feel free to print one for your records. I accessed the chart [here](#).

Best,
Marcella



From: Perretti, Marcella
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:47 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: Press Conference Remarks

Sean,

Attached are some talking points I outlined for Senator McColley-feel free to share with Senator Gavarone. Senator McColley asked me to research these three topics this morning and here is the information I could gather on short notice. We are still waiting on a call back from someone who could potentially have more to add, but here are the talking points for now.

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Subject: Press Conference Remarks

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Best,

Sean Parrott
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senate Majority Whip Theresa Gavarone
2nd District
614-466-8060 (Office)

Name	Amount Donated	Type
Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights		
Sixteen Thirty Fund	\$4,967,600	501(c)(4)
Advocacy Action Fund	\$1,500,000	501(c)(4)
ACLU (All)	\$2,990,000	501(c)(3)
One Person One Vote	\$145,987.83	501(c)(4)
Open Society Policy Center	\$4,000,000	501(c)(4)
The Fairness Project	\$2,700,000	501(c)(4)
Global Impact Social Welfare Foundation	\$1,525,000	501(c)(4)
North Fund	\$250,000	501(c)(4)
Hopewell Fund	\$550,000	501(c)(3)
Tides Foundation	\$3,685,000	501(c)(3)
Ohio Progressive Collaborative	\$755,000	501(c)(4)
Pro-Choice Ohio	\$50,000	(501)(c)(4)
Planned Parenthood (All)	\$750,419	501(c)(3)
Think Big America	\$250,000	501(c)(4)
Total:	\$24,119,006	

Name	Amount Donated	Type of Group
Pre-August OnePersonOneVote		
The Fairness Project	\$325,000	501(c)(4)
Democracy Fund	\$500,000	501(c)(3)
Ohio Progressive Collaborative	\$250,000	501(c)(4)
Sixteen Thirty Fund	\$2,500,000	501(c)(4)
Tides Foundation	\$1,875,000	501(c)(3)
Every Eligible American	\$450,000	501(c)(4)
ACLU (Ohio and National)	\$1,000,000	501(c)(3)
North Fund	\$500,000	501(c)(4)
Hopewell Fund	\$650,000	501(c)(3)
Article IV	\$700,000	501(c)(3)
Unite America, Inc	\$100,000	501(c)(3)
Ohio Organizing Collaborative	256,000	501(c)(3)
Total	9,106,000	
Post-Special OnePersonOneVote		
Name	Amount Donated	Type of Group
American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio	\$320,000	501(c)(3)
Every Eligible American	\$150,000	501(c)(4)
Ohio AFL-CIO	\$50,000	501(c)(5)
Ohio Progressive Collaborative	\$250,000	501(c)(3)
North Fund	\$150,000	501(c)(4)
Oriana House, Inc 2	\$10,000	501(c)(3)
Sixteen Thirty Fund	2,500,000	501(c)(4)
The Fairness Project	120,000	501(c)(4)
Unite and Renew Fund	\$150,000	501(c)(4)
National Education Association	\$120,000	501(c)(5)
Total	\$3,820,000	

Name	Amount Donated	Type of Group
Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom PAC		
Pre-General		
PP ADVOCATES MAR MONTE	\$50,000	501(c)(4)
1630 Fund	\$2,000,000	501(c)(4)
Pro-Choice Ohio	\$25,000	501(c)(4)
Total:	\$2,075,000	
Semi-Annual		
Pro-Choice Ohio	\$185,000	501(c)(4)
Ohio Women's Alliance	\$170,000	501(c)(3)
American Civil Liberties Union Inc.	\$1,150,000	501(c)(3)
Urge Unite for Reproductive Freedom PAC	\$250,000	501(c)(3)
Sixteen Thirty Fund	\$1,250,000	501(c)(4)
Planned Parenthood Action Fund	\$1,000,000	501(c)(4)
The Fairness Project	\$500,000	501(c)(4)
Planned Parenthood of SW Ohio	\$145,650	501(c)(4)
Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio	\$120,000	501(c)(4)
American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio Inc.	\$800,000	501(c)(3)
Open Policy Society Center	\$500,000	501(c)(4)
The Fairness Project	\$250,000	501(c)(4)
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio	\$600,000	501(c)(4)
Naral Pro-Choice America	\$100,000	501(c)(3)
Total:	\$7,020,650	

Thank you for being here today.

As most of you all know, improving the integrity and confidence in our elections has been a priority for me since day one. I was proud to author the language in House Bill 458 last year that required a valid photo ID to vote, and most recently enacted, the DATA Act, a first-of-its-kind legislation that created standardized definitions for all 88 County Boards of Elections, providing more transparency into Ohio's elections.

In the 2023 election, money poured into Ohio from every direction. Millions of dollars being spent on campaigns that drastically changed the landscape of Ohio. Millions of dollars will continue to be sent into Ohio by individuals and groups as we see more initiatives potentially making the ballot in the near future. This is not unique to Ohio, but states across the country have seen large amounts of money flowing in. Even more appalling, millions of dollars are being sent from countries across the world to influence American elections. That is right, large foreign corporations and billionaires are spending money to influence ballot measures in our country.

For example, in Maine, a Canadian utility company spent over \$10 million dollars to defeat a 2020 ballot initiative regarding a major state project.ⁱ Further, in Montana, an Australian mining company, through its Canadian subsidiary, spent over \$300,000 dollars to oppose a ballot measure to reduce water pollution in mines.ⁱⁱ The ballot measure was ultimately defeated.

Why should we accept this? These are our elections and we will work to keep it that way. That is why we are proud to introduce SB XX, which will expand the existing law prohibition against a foreign national making a contribution or expenditure to a candidate to also include prohibiting a foreign national from making a contribution or expenditure to a ballot issue.

To be clear, this bill prevents dark money 501c4 groups like Generation Now from accepting money from foreign nationals and using it to influence our elections.

When I found out that foreign nationals could contribute to ballot issues I was outraged. We can't have foreign influence in our elections. With passage of this bill, Ohio would be joining a number of other states to shut this down. California, Colorado, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington all have passed similar laws. From this growing list, you can see that this is not red or blue issue, but an issue being addressed protect American elections.

Furthermore, polls show that nearly 80% of voters support prohibiting foreign nationals from funding ballot measures (University of Maryland).ⁱⁱⁱ Americans want to see this law changed. Those poll results align with the most recent election in Maine, in which a similar law was passed by voters with 86% approval.^{iv}

I thank you again for being here to cover this legislation and we're happy to answer any questions.

ⁱ <https://campaignlegal.org/update/state-and-federal-legislators-should-fix-foreign-spending-loophole>

ⁱⁱ <https://campaignlegal.org/update/state-and-federal-legislators-should-fix-foreign-spending-loophole>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://publicconsultation.org/united-states/foreign-funding-of-ballot-initiatives/>

^{iv} [https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_Question_2,_Prohibit_Foreign_Spending_in_Elections_Initiative_\(2023\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_Question_2,_Prohibit_Foreign_Spending_in_Elections_Initiative_(2023))

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:12 PM
To: Parrott, Sean; Vike, Brett; Bernow, Kayleigh; Perretti, Marcella
Cc: Cox, William
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Updated with your bill number. This bill is not yet live online, so no link yet.

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 2:12 PM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

[View this email in your browser](#)



Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

COLUMBUS—State Senator [Theresa Gavarone](#) (R-Bowling Green) and State Senator [Rob McColley](#) (R-Napoleon) are introducing Senate Bill 215 to prohibit foreign contributions to ballot issue campaigns. The bill extends the current law banning foreign contributions to candidates running for office, eliminating the loophole for issue campaigns.

"Ohio's elections should be about Ohioans, not foreign individuals, governments, and entities trying to influence our democracy and decisions," Gavarone said.

"Senate Bill 215 prevents foreign influence on statewide ballot issue campaigns on both sides of the debate."

"Foreign funding on ballot initiatives has no place in Ohio," McColley said. "This legislation preserves and protects these pivotal questions from foreign influence, which was a concern of our founding fathers for the stability and success of our government."

Nearly [80% of voters](#) favor a ban on foreign individuals and entities funding ballot initiatives, and the support for such a ban is strong among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. [Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place or legislation pending to prohibit foreign contributions to these campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives.

Senate Bill 215 must next be referred to a committee.

###

Senator Theresa Gavarone represents the 2nd District in the Ohio Senate, which encompasses all of Wood, Ottawa and most or parts of Lucas, Erie and Huron Counties. Learn more at www.OhioSenate.gov/Gavarone.

For a high resolution photo of Senator Gavarone, [click here](#).

Contact: Sean Parrott at (614) 466-8060 or Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov



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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Varrasso, Theresea
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:00 PM
To: Parrott, Sean
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Great! I'll try to get there early for a good spot for pictures. Text me if you need anything. Quite mobile with the camera today!

Theresea Varrasso
Deputy Press Secretary
Ohio Senate Majority Caucus
Office: 614-644-9559
Cell: 740-644-0424

From: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

I am good on my end. Her and McColley are just finalizing what they want to say and then we are good to go.

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:56 AM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Love it! Thank you! Waiting on McColley on his end.

I'm going to try to grab her after caucus to see if she needs anything. Do you?

From: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:55 AM
To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Subject: RE: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Hey Theresea,

Senator Gavarone is good with this.

Thanks!

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 2:28 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>; Vike, Brett <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>; Bernow, Kayleigh

<Kayleigh.Bernow@ohiosenate.gov>; Perretti, Marcella <Marcella.Perretti@ohiosenate.gov>

Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Hello All,

Here is a Will Cox approved press release for your members to review. Please let me know if you or they have any edits. FYI, Senate Bill XXX is a placeholder for a number, and there is a gap between the title and body for a picture—IF I manage to get a good one.

Thanks,

Theresea

From: Office of State Senator Theresa Gavarone <Gavarone@OhioSenate.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 2:26 PM

To: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>

Subject: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

[View this email in your browser](#)



Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

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"Ohio's elections should be about Ohioans, not foreign individuals, governments, and entities trying to influence our democracy and decisions," Gavarone said.

"Senate Bill XXX prevents foreign influence on statewide ballot issue campaigns on both sides of the debate."

"Foreign funding on ballot initiatives has no place in Ohio," McColley said. "This legislation preserves and protects these pivotal questions from foreign influence, which was a concern of our founding fathers for the stability and success of our government."

Nearly [80% of voters](#) favor a ban on foreign individuals and entities funding ballot initiatives, and the support for such a ban is strong among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. [Multiple states](#) have similar laws already in place or legislation pending to prohibit foreign contributions to these campaigns. [Bipartisan legislation](#) has also been introduced in U.S. Congress to prohibit these contributions in state and local ballot initiatives.

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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA CONTACT:

Theresa Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email: Theresa.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov

Cox, William

From: Parrott, Sean
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 7:40 PM
To: Theresa Gavarone
Subject: Fwd: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Parrott, Sean" <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>
Date: January 22, 2024 at 2:38:33 PM EST
To: theresagavarone@gmail.com
Subject: FW: [Test] RELEASE: Gavarone, McColley Introduce Bill to Ban Foreign Contributions to Ballot Issue Campaigns

From: Varrasso, Theresea <Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 2:28 PM
To: Parrott, Sean <Sean.Parrott@ohiosenate.gov>; Vike, Brett <Brett.Vike@ohiosenate.gov>; Bernow, Kayleigh <Kayleigh.Bernow@ohiosenate.gov>; Perretti, Marcella <Marcella.Perretti@ohiosenate.gov>
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MAJORITY CAUCUS MEDIA

CONTACT:

Theresea Varrasso

Senate Majority Communications

Phone: (614) 644-9559

Email:

Theresea.Varrasso@ohiosenate.gov