Cassels

Changes to the Ontario *Election Finances Act*

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12/11/2018

Recent changes have been made to the Ontario *Election Finances Act* (the Act) enacted by Bill 57, including new rules governing contributions to political constituents and the lifting of restrictions applicable to political fundraising events.

The main features of the new rules are highlighted below.

Contributions

Starting in 2019, the maximum annual contribution that a person can make to any one registered party, or to a registered constituency association, registered nomination contestant and registered leadership contestant, is $1,600 plus $25 for every year starting on or after January 1, 2020.

Bill 57 also repeals subsection 23(7) of the Act, which governs the maximum amount that a person can contribute at a fund-raising event. Contributions made by a person attending events will now be subject to the annual contributions limits.

The Bill further repeals the requirement in subsection 19(3) of the Act that contributors certify, in a form approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, that their contribution comes only from funds belonging to them, and not from funds given to them for the purpose of making a contribution. However, contributors are still required to make contributions using their own funds.

Corporations and trade unions are still ineligible contributors and are unable to make political contributions in Ontario.

Fundraising

Attendance restrictions under section 23.1 have been repealed, meaning that persons such as a member of the Assembly or the leader of a registered party, is no longer prohibited from attending a fund-raising event. There are also no longer cost-recovery events.

Political Party and Constituency Association Quarterly Allowances

Quarterly allowances, described in section 32.1 of the Act and payable to qualifying political parties and constituency associations, will be phased out by January 1, 2022.

All of these changes, and others, enacted by Bill 57 can be found here, on the website of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

This paper was prepared with information sourced from Elections Ontario.

For further information, please contact Noble C. Chummar or Arthur L. Hamilton.

The authors of this article gratefully acknowledge the assistance of articling student Joseph Hamaliuk the preparation of this article.

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