

# NEWS

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, contact  
David Wert, Public Information Officer  
(909) 387-4717  
[dwert@sbcounty.gov](mailto:dwert@sbcounty.gov)



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## Board OKs contract with FPPC to enforce reform law

SAN BERNARDINO – Under a contract unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors today, the state Fair Political Practices Commission will enforce the County of San Bernardino Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance, which goes into effect on Jan. 1.

The county is the first local government agency to contract with the FPPC for enforcement of a local reform ordinance. The revolutionary concept of utilizing the FPPC stemmed from the need to find a cost-effective and objective means of enforcing the ordinance, free from the possibility of local influence or political bias.

“Contracting with the FPPC ensures our County’s campaign finance reform laws will be applied effectively and objectively,” said San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who proposed the County’s campaign finance ordinance and also recommended contracting with the FPPC rather than creating an internal ethics commission to enforce the rules. “Why add another layer of County government when we already have an independent State agency that is qualified and capable of enforcing our campaign finance law? We can save money and bring greater efficiency by contracting with the State.”

“The new contract with the FPPC ushers in a new era of scrutiny in San Bernardino County that I feel the community will welcome,” said Third District Supervisor James C. Ramos.

“This is a wise move,” said Board of Supervisors Chair Josie Gonzales. “People will know where there will be an immediate reaction when something needs to be investigated.”

The two-year contract approved today provides up to \$493,296 in spending authority for the FPPC to:

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- Audit each candidate campaign committee for the offices of Supervisor, Sheriff-Coroner, District Attorney, Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Assessor, and County Superintendent of Schools.
- Provide at the FPPC's discretion written or verbal assistance to candidates regarding the ordinance.
- Serve as the civil and administrative prosecutor for violations of the ordinance.

The County of San Bernardino Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance creates a \$3,900 per-election-cycle (primary, general, and special) cap on contributions to candidates for elected county offices. The cap is based on the state Political Reform Act, which sets contribution limits for candidates for state office.

The ordinance also will require the electronic filing of contributions or expenditures in excess of \$10,000 for all candidates and independent expenditure committees, require contributors to notify receiving candidates about whether contributions must be aggregated with contributions from other entities, and establish administrative, civil, and, criminal penalties and fines for violation of the ordinance.

Violations would be considered misdemeanors, and subject to fines of up to three times the amount the person failed to report properly or unlawfully contributed, expended, gave, or received, or \$10,000, whichever is greater

The ordinance also requires the county Registrar of Voters to place on the County's web site a copy of each campaign statement within one working day of the statement being filed with the Registrar of Voters.