

Time Line for Campaign Finance

1902

Corrupt Practices Act (Act #6) prohibited candidates from paying to procure party nomination or paying newspaper publishers for endorsements. Public disclosure of campaign expenditures and contributions was not required.

1916

Primary Act (Act #4, 1915, effective 1916) changed nominating process from party caucus system to direct primary. Candidates for statewide and Federal offices required to file campaign finance reports 10 days after primary. Fines established for violations.

1961

Act #178 limited primary expenses in statewide races to \$7500.

1972

Act #259 raised spending limits to \$40,000 for primary candidates for governor and \$20,000 for other statewide primaries and an equal amount for each category in the General Election. State and Federal candidates required to file reports of expenditures and contributions on multiple reporting dates for both primary and general election.

1976

U.S. Supreme Court ruled in [Buckley V. Valeo](#) that spending limits are unconstitutional. Vermont repealed all limitations on expenditures, but retained its constitutionally-permissible limits on contributions to candidates from individuals and political committees (Act #188).

1982

Act #197 clarified that limitations on contributions apply separately to the primary and general elections and that out of state political committees had to follow Vermont law when contributing to statewide candidates.

1988

Act #263 mandated that state representatives and senators and each candidate for county office who spent or received \$500 or more had to file campaign finance reports.

1992

Act #156 established voluntary spending limits. Candidates could file an affidavit with the Secretary of State agreeing that their total expenditures would meet the following limits: \$400,000 for governor, \$100,000 for lieutenant governor, \$50,000 for attorney general, and \$40,000 for treasurer, secretary of state, and auditor of accounts. State senators and state representatives could also agree to preset limits. To offset the advantage of incumbencies, challengers were allowed to spend 110% of the voluntary limit for each office.

1997

[\(Act #64\)](#) introduced some public funding for campaigns, changed reporting requirements and included limits on expenditures and contributions.

1998

November: Act #64 went into effect the day after the 1998 general election for the 2000 election cycle. The provisions of Act 64 were added to the Vermont Statutes Annotated in Title 17, Chapter 59, Sections 2801 - 2893.

2000

First candidates for governor and lieutenant governor receive public financing under Act #64. (Details on election division webpages.)

August: In *Landell v. Sorrell*, Federal District Court Judge Sessions struck portions of Act #64 as unconstitutional, most notably striking limits on expenditure of candidates. The decision is appealed.

2004

Second Circuit Court of Appeals issues Amended Opinion on the matter of *Landell v. Sorrell*. (Additional details of decision on election division webpages.)

2005

Vermont Republican State Committee, et al, filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari asking the United States Supreme Court to review the decision of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear oral arguments.

The Vermont General Assembly passed Act #62, which includes some stricter reporting requirements within 10 days of a primary or general election and also provides for increases to the stricken expenditure limits (still not in effect) based upon increases in the Consumer Price Index if the Court reinstates the expenditure limits.

2006

June 26, 2006: U.S. Supreme Court found Act 64's expenditure limits unconstitutional and contributions limits too low.