



## Connecticut

### Summary of SB 431, An Act Concerning Referenda, Independent Expenditures and Certain Other Political Spending

- SB 431 is necessary because Connecticut’s campaign finance laws contain a loophole that allows foreign individuals and entities to spend unlimited funds to influence the outcome of state and local ballot questions/referenda.
- Sec. 9-620e sets the following limit: “A political committee formed solely to aid or promote the success or defeat of a referendum question shall not receive contributions from a national committee or from a committee of a candidate for federal or out-of-state office.” **But it is silent on funds from foreign sources.**
- In the wake of federal inaction, it falls to the states to guard against foreign interference.
- Seven states have enacted prohibitions to safeguard their state’s ballot measures from foreign interference, and another dozen states are considering legislation.
- Why is it important? Any attempts by foreign interests to make expenditures could result in the blocking of beneficial changes impacting the **constitutional structure** of state government.
- At the state level, votes on charter revisions, budgets and advisory ballot measures are commonplace. Foreign expenditures could put our system of local grass-roots democracy at risk by drowning out the voices of local voters.
- It’s not beyond the imagination that this could happen. As early as 2014, there is much evidence of foreign players – specifically Russia – trying to influence the outcome of U.S. elections. That country’s efforts have intensified in recent years, and other countries could attempt to interfere as well.
- **This bill is necessary to protect the integrity of CT state and local elections.**