

Campaign Funds for Security

[HB 4017](#)

Background

Candidates and elected officials in Oregon, and across the country, are facing a growing number of threats and harassment tied directly to their public service. These risks often extend beyond the individual candidate or officeholder to their family and loved ones. According to a recent report, more than 40 percent of state legislators report experiencing threats or attacks in recent years¹.

Problem

Under current Oregon administrative rules, expenditures for security systems, alarm monitoring, and related protective measures can be interpreted as prohibited personal use. This ambiguity discourages candidates from taking reasonable steps to protect themselves and their families or forces them to absorb security costs personally, even when those risks exist solely because of their public role.

Solution

HB 4017 clarifies that candidates and officeholders may use campaign funds for reasonable, verified security expenses when those costs arise because of their candidacy or service in public office.

- Amends ORS 260.407 to allow the use of campaign funds for physical security equipment and related services, including alarms, cameras, locks, monitoring services, and similar protective measures.
- Allows security expenses for a candidate or officeholder and the immediate family of a candidate or officeholder when threats or risks are connected to the individual's public role.
- This allows expenses to be paid directly by a campaign or provided as an in-kind contribution, subject to standard reporting and disclosure requirements.
- Does not require proof of a specific threat or law enforcement verification, allowing candidates to act proactively.
- Does not cover armed security personnel or the purchase of weapons.

Who else allows this?

Four states explicitly allow for candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds for security and alarm system expenses for themselves and immediate family members (California, Louisiana, Minnesota and recently Illinois). Two states allow flexibility around campaign-related exceptions to restrictions on the use of government funds, meaning officeholders can access necessary safety protections, even during campaign activities (Colorado and Wisconsin). Federal candidates may use campaign funds for security.



¹ Brennan Center for Justice, [Intimidation of State and Local Officeholders: The Threat to Democracy](#) (Jan. 25, 2024)