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Legislative Summary

BILL C-25: AN ACT TO AMEND THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT AND TO ENACT AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF CERTAIN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, 2026

45-1-C25-E

30 June 2026

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Library and Research Services

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Legislative Summary of Bill C-25
(Preliminary version)

45-1-C25-E

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY OF BILL C-25: AN ACT TO AMEND THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT AND TO ENACT AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF CERTAIN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, 2026

1 BACKGROUND

Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026 (short title: Strong and Free Elections Act)[1], was introduced in the House of Commons on 26 March 2026 by the Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. **A Charter Statement prepared by the Department of Justice was tabled in the House of Commons on 28 April 2026.**[2]

Following second reading, Bill C-25 was referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC), which reported the bill to the House of Commons with several amendments on 3 June 2026. On 11 June 2026, the bill, as amended by PROC, was adopted by the House of Commons at third reading.

At the same time, the Senate adopted a motion authorizing the pre-study of Bill C-25 by the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (LCJC) on 7 May 2026; that committee presented its report on the subject matter of the bill on 4 June 2026.[3] After the bill was referred to the Senate, LCJC examined it and reported on it without amendment, but with additional observations.[4] The Senate passed the bill at third reading, without amendment, on 18 June 2026, and received Royal Assent the same day.

The bill amends the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA)[5] to accomplish several distinct legislative objectives, including:

- creating new prohibitions and amending existing ones, notably to prevent the production of excessively long ballots and to combat disinformation in elections;
- creating prohibitions with regard to nomination contests and leadership contests;
- limiting the ability of political parties and third parties to use or accept certain contributions, including in cryptocurrencies;
- expanding the requirements relating to political parties' policies for the protection of personal information;
- modifying the scope of certain offences and violations under the CEA to include an attempt to commit, a conspiracy to commit, being an accessory after the fact or counselling to commit such offences; and

- expanding the scope of certain provisions relating to the administration and enforcement of the Act.

The bill also enacts An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026, which **changes the names of federal electoral districts** in seven provinces.

Many of the amendments made by the bill stem from or are based on recommendations made by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and the former Commissioner of Canada Elections (CCE) following the 43rd and 44th general elections.[6] In addition, several amendments respond to recommendations of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions.[7]

In recent elections, the proliferation of candidates to protest the electoral system has resulted in particularly long ballots in some districts. In March 2026, PROC recommended amendments to the CEA to restrict the strategic use of the nomination process by organized groups. Several changes to the nomination process in the bill are in line with the PROC's recommendations.[8]

Finally, certain elements found in Bill C-25 were contained in Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act,[9] which was introduced in the 1st Session of the 44th Parliament and died on the *Order Paper* following prorogation in January 2025.

2 DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Bill C-25 consists of 89 clauses. Only the key legislative amendments made by the bill are described below.

2.1 PART 1 – AMENDMENTS TO THE *CANADA ELECTIONS ACT*

2.1.1 Removal of the Returning Officers' Addresses from the *Canada Gazette* (Clause 2)

According to the government, the bill seeks to protect returning officers' home addresses,[10] as this information is currently published in the *Canada Gazette*. Clause 2 amends section 25 of the CEA to specify that the information to be published in the *Canada Gazette* regarding each returning officer includes their name, place of residence (municipality, or its equivalent, and province) and occupation.

2.1.2 Measures Regarding the Nomination Process (Clauses 3, 4, 39, 52 and 65)

The bill introduces new prohibitions on the nomination process in order to limit the possibility of producing ballots with an excessive number of candidates.

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Clause 4 creates new sections 92.1 to 92.3 of the CEA. New sections 92.1 and 92.2 of the CEA prohibit conveying false or misleading information in a nomination paper, as well as including false or misleading information by the person filing a nomination paper. Intentional contraventions of these prohibitions constitute hybrid offences (new sections 486(3)(e), 486(3)(f) and 486(4)(c) of the CEA, created by clause 52). Contraventions of sections 92.1 and 92.2 may also constitute violations subject to administrative monetary penalties (section 508.1(a) of the CEA, amended by clause 65).

Candidates are currently required to obtain a certain number of signatures from electors in their electoral district; however, the same elector may sign the nomination paper for an unlimited number of candidates. New section 92.3 of the CEA would prohibit an elector from signing the nomination paper of more than one candidate for a given election. Contraventions of section 92.3 of the CEA may constitute violations subject to administrative monetary penalties (section 508.1(a) of the CEA, amended by clause 65).

It should be noted that under new section 71(2.1) of the CEA, introduced by clause 3, a nomination cannot be refused on the ground that an elector signed more than one nomination paper.

The CEA currently allows a person to act as an official agent for multiple candidates in the same electoral district. New section 477.2(b.1) of the CEA, created by clause 39(2), prevents this situation, requiring each candidate in the same electoral district to be represented by a separate agent **for a given election**.

2.1.3 Conditions for Receiving Preliminary Lists of Electors (Clause 5)

Section 93(1.1) of the CEA allows all eligible or registered parties to request preliminary lists of electors from the CEO for an electoral district in respect of which a writ has been issued. Clause 5 amends this section to add criteria that must be met to obtain the preliminary lists of electors. Accordingly, parties may receive the preliminary lists only if they:

- held a seat in the House of Commons on the day before the day the writ was issued;
- endorsed a candidate in one of the last two elections in the electoral district concerned; or
- endorsed candidates in at least two thirds of all electoral districts in the preceding general election.

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In addition, clause 5 adds section 93(1.2) to the CEA to specify how to determine whether a party has previously endorsed candidates in an electoral district whose boundaries have been revised or that is newly established.

2.1.4 Conduct of Advance Polling (Clause 5.1)

Section 175 of the CEA sets out a number of measures to be followed by election officers working at advance polling stations. Specifically, section 175(5) of the CEA provides that, for advance polling stations, election officers shall keep the sealed ballot boxes in their custody in accordance with the CEO's instructions, until the counting of the ballots.

Pursuant to an amendment proposed by PROC and adopted at report stage in the House of Commons, clause 5.1 of the bill creates new section 175(4.1) of the CEA and replaces section 175(5) of the CEA. New section 175(4.1) of the CEA provides that candidates or their representatives may, when an advance polling station closes, sign the seal of any ballot box that was used on a day of advance polling. New section 175(5) of the CEA states that the election officer who has sealed ballot boxes in their custody shall take every precaution to ensure the safekeeping of those boxes and to prevent any person from having unlawful access to them. If that officer entrusts the custody of a ballot box to another election officer, they shall record this fact and ensure that the candidates are notified in writing.

A representative from Elections Canada told PROC that clause 5.1 of the bill would codify in the CEA practices that are currently set out in the CEO's instructions to election officers.[11]

2.1.5 Prohibitions on Voting at Elections and Prohibition on Using a Broadcasting Station Outside of Canada

2.1.5.1 Prohibition in Relation to Ballots (Clause 7)

Sections 281.7(1)(f) and 281.7(1)(i) of the CEA prohibit acts intended to destroy or damage ballots, ballot boxes, books and packets of ballots; however, these prohibitions do not extend to special ballots or their envelopes.

Clause 7(1) amends section 281.7(1)(f) of the CEA to specify that special ballots must not be altered, defaced or destroyed. Clause 7(2) amends section 281.7(1)(i) of the CEA to add a prohibition on a person destroying, taking, opening or otherwise interfering with an inner or outer envelope containing a special ballot.

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2.1.5.2 Undue Influence by Foreigners at an Election (Clause 8)

Current section 282.4 of the CEA prohibits foreign persons and entities from unduly influencing an elector, during an election period to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or registered party. It also prohibits the sale of advertising space to these same persons or entities to transmit an election advertising message. Clause 8 amends the various parts of this prohibition so that it applies at all times and extends its scope to foreign influence aimed at voting or refraining from voting for a potential candidate or an eligible party.

Clause 8(2) amends the list of non-Canadian entities subject to this prohibition to include cover entities whose primary activity in Canada is doing anything to influence electors. Under clause 8(3), references to foreign political parties, governments and agents or mandataries under current section 282.4 of the CEA are replaced by references to foreign entities, economic entities, powers or states as defined in the *Foreign Interference and Security of Information Act*.[12]

Clause 8(7) adds to the current prohibition on selling advertising space to a non-Canadian person or entity seeking to transmit an election advertising message to also prohibit these persons or entities from seeking to transmit a partisan advertising message.

2.1.5.3 Bribery (Clause 9)

Current section 282.7 of the CEA prohibits the offer or acceptance of a bribe, during an election period, for the purpose of influencing an elector's voting behaviour, either generally or in relation to a particular candidate or registered party. Clause 9 amends this prohibition to apply at all times and extends its scope to cover influencing an elector, via a bribe, to vote or refrain from voting for a potential candidate or eligible party, in addition to candidates and registered parties.

2.1.5.4 Prohibition on Using a Broadcasting Station Outside of Canada (Clause 10)

Current section 330(1) of the CEA prohibits the use of a "broadcasting" station outside Canada during an election period for the purpose of influencing an elector to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or registered party. Clause 10 amends this prohibition to apply at all times, and extends its scope to cover influence involving voting for a potential candidate, nomination contestant, leadership contestant or an eligible party. It also extends the scope of electoral events to include nomination and leadership contests, along with elections.

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2.1.6 Prohibitions on Foreign Property, Services and Funds

2.1.6.1 Expansion of Certain Definitions (Clauses 13, 14, 16 and 20)

Current section 349.01 of the CEA sets out the definitions applicable to the prohibition, as found in section 349.02 of the CEA, on third parties using funds received from foreign entities for partisan activity, advertising, election advertising or an election survey.

Clauses 13 and 14 expand the definition of advertising and partisan activity to include promoting or opposing a leadership contestant. In addition, clause 13(3) amends the list of foreign entities to which this prohibition applies to include entities that carry on, as a primary activity in Canada, activities intended to influence electors. Further, references to foreign political parties, governments and agents or mandataries under the definition of "foreign entity" in current section 349.01(1) of the CEA are replaced by references to foreign entities, economic entities, powers or states as defined in the *Foreign Interference and Security of Information Act*. Clause 13(2) adds to the list of activities that are expressly exempted from the definition of "advertising" to include calling persons on the telephone only to encourage them to vote at a nomination contest or leadership contest.

Clause 14 adds that the provision of foreign property or services is included in the current prohibition on the use of foreign funds by Canadian third parties for partisan activities, advertising and election surveys. Foreign entities are prohibited from circumventing or attempting to circumvent this prohibition, or to collude with others for that purpose.

Current section 349.4(2) of the CEA applies to the pre-election period and defines a "foreign third party" for the purposes of prohibiting them from incurring certain expenses (i.e., partisan activity, partisan advertising and election surveys). Clause 16 broadens this definition to apply to potential candidates and eligible parties, and expands the prohibition to cover entities whose primary activity in Canada is doing anything to influence electors.

Current section 351.1(2) of the CEA sets out the definition of "foreign third party" applicable to the prohibition on foreign third parties incurring certain expenses during an election period (partisan activity, election advertising and election surveys). Clause 20 amends the definition to broaden it in the same way as does clause 16.

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2.1.6.2 Prohibitions on Accepting Certain Contributions (Clause 15)

Clause 15 creates new sections 349.04 and 349.05 to the CEA. New section 349.04 of the CEA prohibits third parties from accepting certain contributions for partisan activities, partisan or election advertising, and election survey purposes. The new prohibited forms of contributions are:

- a cryptoasset;[13]
- a money order; or
- a prepaid payment product, such as a prepaid credit card or gift card.

New section 349.05 of the CEA requires that the third party receiving such a contribution must act within 30 days after becoming aware of its receipt. The contribution must be either returned unused to the donor or, if this is not possible, destroyed. If neither of these options is feasible, the contribution is to be paid to the CEO, who will forward it to the Receiver General for Canada.

2.1.6.3 Acceptance or Use of Certain Contributions (Clauses 26, 35, 37, 38, 40(2), 45 and 60)

Clause 26 creates new sections 372.1 and 372.2 of the CEA, relating to the acceptance or use of certain types of contributions.

New section 372.1 of the CEA prohibits the chief agent of a registered party, financial agent of a registered association, official agent of a candidate, or financial agent of a nomination contestant or leadership contestant from accepting contributions in the form of:

- a cryptoasset;
- a money order; or
- a prepaid payment product, such as a prepaid credit card or gift card.

New section 497(1)(h.1) of the CEA, created by clause 60(1), provides that a contravention of new section 372.1 is a summary conviction offence.

New section 372.2 of the CEA provides that, as the case may be, the chief agent of the party, the financial agent of the association, the official agent of the candidate, the financial agent of the nomination contestant or leadership contestant must act within 30 days after becoming aware of the receipt of such a contribution. It requires that the contribution be either returned to the contributor or, if this is not possible,

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destroyed. If neither of these options is feasible, the contribution must be paid to the CEO, who will forward that amount to the Receiver General.

New section 497(1)(h.2) of the CEA, created by clause 60(1), provides that a contravention of new section 372.2 is an offence punishable on summary conviction. However, if the contravention is deliberate, then it is a hybrid offence under new section 497(2)(m.1) of the CEA, created by clause 60(2).

Clause 35 creates section 432(2.1) of the CEA, which requires the financial transactions return of a registered party that has received such contributions to include a list of the measures taken by the party's chief agent under new section 372.2 of the CEA. Clause 37 creates the same obligation for the financial transactions return of a registered association (new section 475.4(2.1) of the CEA); clause 38 does the same for the nomination campaign return of a nomination contestant (new section 476.75(2.1) of the CEA), clause 40(2) for a candidate's electoral campaign return (new section 477.59(2.1) of the CEA) and clause 45 for the leadership campaign return of a leadership contestant (new section 478.8(2.1) of the CEA).

2.1.6.4 Registration Threshold and Source of Contributions (Clauses 18 and 19)

Current section 349.94 of the CEA prohibits a third party from using a contribution intended for partisan activities, partisan advertising or election survey purposes during the pre-election period from contributors whose name, address or class of contributor is unknown to the third party. Clause 18 amends this section to remove the reference to donor classes.

Clause 19 creates a new section 349.95 of the CEA, which requires a third party to use only contributions from Canadian individuals to pay for partisan activity expenses, partisan advertising expenses or election survey expenses during the pre-election period. For the purposes of this section, "Canadian individual" means a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

If the third party wishes to use its own funds, it is subject to the following rules:

- the third party may use its own funds to pay regulated expenses if the total amount of contributions received during the previous year is equal to or less than 10% of its revenues for that year;
- grants and contributions received from the Government of Canada, a province or a municipality are excluded when determining revenue for the previous year;
- in using its own funds, the third party must include financial statements for the previous year in its expenses return referred to in section 359 of the CEA;

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- the previous year means, at the choice of the third party, the calendar year that precedes the calendar year in which a pre-election period falls or the fiscal year that precedes the fiscal year in which a pre-election period occurs; and
- these rules do not apply in respect of individuals or third parties who are not required to register, as they do not meet the $500 expense threshold.

2.1.6.5 Election Period (Clauses 22 and 23)

Section 357.1 of the CEA prohibits third parties from using a contribution for partisan activity, election advertising or survey purposes if they do not know the name and address of the contributor or are otherwise unable to determine the contributor's class. Clause 22 amends the section to remove the reference to the class of contributor.

Clause 23 creates a new section 358 of the CEA (currently repealed), which obliges third parties to use only contributions from Canadian individuals to pay for partisan activities, election advertising or election surveys (regulated expenses) during the election period. For the purposes of this section, "Canadian individual" means a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

If the third party wishes to use its own funds, it is subject to the following rules:

- the third party may use its own funds to pay regulated expenses if the total amount of contributions received during the previous year is equal to or less than 10% of its revenue for that year;
- grants and contributions received from the Government of Canada, a province or a municipality are not included in determining the revenue for the previous year;
- if it uses its own funds, the third party must include its financial statements for the previous year in its expenses return referred to in section 359 of the CEA;
- the previous year means, at the choice of the third party, the calendar year that precedes the calendar year in which a pre-election period falls or the fiscal year that precedes the fiscal year in which a pre-election period occurs; and
- these rules do not apply in respect of individuals or third parties who are not required to register, as they do not meet the $500 expense threshold.

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2.1.7 Third Party Expense Returns

2.1.7.1 Pre-election Period (First Interim Third Party Expenses Return) (Clause 17)

Current section 349.91 of the CEA provides that a third party required to register must file a first interim expenses return with the CEO in certain circumstances, such as when it has incurred expenses of $10,000 or more during a given period. Clause 17(1) creates new section 349.91(2.1), which requires that, when section 349.95 of the CEA applies to the third party expenses return, it must include certain information for each Canadian individual who has made contributions of $200 or more, including their name and address.

Clause 17(2) replaces sections 349.91(4)(a) to 349.91(4)(c) of the CEA, which list certain information that must be included in the first interim return. The new sections require that the first interim expenses return must indicate the amount of contributions for regulated events during a given period, as well as the name, address, date and amount of contributions of each Canadian individual whose contribution of a total amount of more than $200 was used for regulated expenses. Clause 17(3) repeals section 349.91(7) of the CEA, which listed certain classes of contributors.

2.1.7.2 Election Period (Third Interim Third Party Expenses Return) (Clause 21)

Current section 357.01 of the CEA requires, in certain circumstances, a registered third party to file a third interim expenses return during the election period, which is the 21st day before polling day. Clause 21(1) creates a new section 357.01(2.1) of the CEA which specifies that the interim return to which section 349.95(1) or 358(1) applies must contain certain information (e.g., name, address, etc.) about each Canadian individual who has made contributions totalling $200 or more, which were used to pay for regulated expenses during the given period.

Current sections 357.01(4)(a) to 357.01(4)(c) of the CEA set out the disclosure requirements for interim third-party contributions. Clause 21(2) amends these sections to remove references to donor classes. Lastly, clause 21(3) repeals section 357.01(7) of the CEA, which listed the classes of donors for the purposes of sections 4(a) and 4(b).

2.1.7.3 Post-election Period (Third Party Expenses Return) (Clause 24)

Under section 359 of the CEA, every third party that is required to be registered in accordance with section 349.6(1) (pre-election period) or section 353(1) (election period) is to file an expenses return with the CEO within four months after polling day. Clause 24(1) creates new sections 359(3.1) to 359(3.3) of the CEA, which stipulate that:

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- where section 349.05 of the CEA applies, the third-party expenses return must include a list of the measures that the third party has taken with respect to contributions in the form of cryptoassets, money orders or prepaid payment products;
- where section 349.95(2) or 358(2) of the CEA applies (use of the third party's own funds for regulated expenses), the third-party expenses return must include the financial statements referred to in that section; and
- where section 349.95(1) or 358(1) apply (use of contributions received from Canadian individuals), the third-party expenses return must include, for each individual who contributed $200 or more, their name, address, the amount of the contribution, a list of the property or services contributed, and the date of each contribution.

Clause 24(2) amends sections 359(4)(a) to 359(4)(b.1) of the CEA, which specify other information that the third-party expenses return must mention. Clause 24(3) repeals section 359(6) of the CEA, which listed classes of donors.

Section 24(4) replaces section 359(7) of the CEA, specifying that if the third party is unable to identify which contributions were received for partisan activity, partisan election advertising or election survey purposes, its expenses return must include the names and addresses of every contributor who contributed a total of more than $200 to it during the given period.

2.1.8 Prohibitions in Relation to Nomination Contest or Leadership Contest

The bill establishes prohibitions that apply specifically to nomination and leadership contests. The scope of several other prohibitions, discussed elsewhere in this document, is also expanded to apply to leadership and nomination contestants, as well as potential candidates.

2.1.8.1 Undue Influence by Foreigners at a Nomination Contest or Leadership Contest (Clause 25)

Current sections 282.4 to 282.8 of the CEA contain a series of prohibitions on foreigners unduly influencing Canadian voters from voting or refraining from voting at elections. Clause 25 creates new sections 362.1 to 362.4 of the CEA, which mirror these same prohibitions except the new sections apply to nomination and leadership contests. Pursuant to new section 362.1 of the CEA, the prohibitions relating to undue influence by foreigners during nomination and leadership contests apply inside and outside Canada.

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2.1.8.2 Offences for Prohibitions on Voting at a Nomination Contest or Leadership Contest (Clauses 59, 62 and 63)

Clause 59 creates section 496.2 of the CEA to provide that every person is guilty of a hybrid offence for engaging in undue foreign influence, collusion, offering a bribe, selling advertising space, accepting a bribe or using intimidation and duress in the context of a nomination or leadership contest. These new offences are added to the list of offences covered by section 500(5) of the CEA.

Similarly, every entity is guilty of a hybrid offence for engaging in undue foreign influence, collusion, offering a bribe or selling advertising space in the context of a nomination or leadership contest. These new offences are added to the list of offences covered by section 500(5) of the CEA pursuant to clause 62(2).

Clause 63, **the scope of which was expanded by PROC,** makes, for a nomination or a leadership contestant **or the financial agent of a nomination or leadership contestant**, offering a bribe an offence that is a corrupt practice (new section 502(2)h.001) of the CEA).

2.1.9 Expenses for Candidate Security (Clauses 27 and 40 to 43)

Currently, the CEA provides that candidates who are elected or who receive at least 10% of the votes may obtain a partial reimbursement of personal expenses incurred during the election period. Although personal security expenses are not expressly provided for in the CEA, the CEO had set their reimbursement at 60% of $5,000 (maximum reimbursement of $3,000).[14]

Section 378 of the CEA defines certain expenses that constitute a candidate's personal expenses. Clause 27 creates new section 378(1)(e), which specifies that expenses incurred for security purposes constitute a personal expense. New sections 477.73 and 477.74 of the CEA, as amended by clauses 41 and 42, provide for the reimbursement of 65% of security expenses, to a maximum of $3,250. Related amendments are also made to the CEA.

2.1.10 Amendments Relating to Regulated Fundraising Events (Clauses 28 to 30, 61 **and 83.1**)

Current section 384.2 of the CEA requires that the CEO be notified of any regulated fundraising event and that certain information be published online five days before the event starts. This requirement is eliminated by clause 28, and related offences are repealed pursuant to clause 61 (sections 497.01(a) to 497.01(k) of the CEA).

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Current section 384.3(13) of the CEA requires the CEO to publish the reports provided by registered parties about regulated fundraising events. Clause 29 amends section 384.3(13) to circumscribe the information that can be published by the CEO concerning the location of the regulated fundraising events.

Clause 30 repeals section 384.4 of the CEA. This section requires that any contribution received at a regulated fundraising event that is not compliant with the required reporting and publication obligations (sections 384.2 and 384.3 of the CEA) is to be returned to the contributor or paid to the CEO, for remittance to the Receiver General, within 30 days of becoming aware of the non-compliance.

A PROC amendment adds clause 83.1, which replaces the current section 541(1) of the CEA. The amendment exempts certain reports on regulated fundraising events from the requirement to be made available for public inspection. Regarding this amendment, the Member for South Shore–St. Margarets explained the following at committee:

> **Bill C-25 includes a requirement that Elections Canada redact the exact location of a regulated fundraising event, only publishing the municipality and province or territory where the event took place, to address these safety concerns.**
>
> **However, Elections Canada also has a general obligation to allow public inspection of all reports in its possession upon request, unless otherwise exempted. Consequently, we're hoping an additional amendment is needed to exempt the RFE reports that I mentioned before, received by Elections Canada in their original unredacted form, from public inspection.**
>
> **Lastly, for the regulated fundraising event, or RFE, after-event reports are published online by Elections Canada. They're identical to the documents that the public may inspect at an RO's office, and we're proposing that Bill C-25 keep this requirement for the CEO to publish these reports, minus the precise address.[15]**

2.1.11 New Provisions Relating to Federal Political Parties' Policies for the Protection of Personal Information (Clauses 31, 32 and 36)

The bill introduces amendments to the requirements with which political parties' personal information policies must comply. These amendments are in addition to the regime set out in the CEA, as recently modified by Part 4 of *An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure*, which received Royal Assent on 12 March 2026.[16]

First, the requirements listed in sections 385(2)(k)(i) to 385(2)(k)(vi) of the CEA are eliminated (clause 31). Second, new section 387(d) of the CEA specifies that, for a political party to be eligible for registration, the CEO must be satisfied that the party's personal information policy complies with the requirements set out in section 446.6(1) of the CEA (clause 32).

New sections 446.6(1)(f) to 446.6(1)(j) of the CEA, created by clause 36(1), require that political parties' policies for the protection of personal information include the following elements:

- Require the party to protect the personal information through physical, organizational and technological security safeguards.
- Require the party to take certain steps in the case of the loss of, unauthorized access to or unauthorized disclosure of information as a result of a breach of its security safeguards. The party must inform an individual of the breach if it is reasonable to believe that there is a real risk of significant harm to that individual.
- Require the party to ensure that any person or entity to which it transfers personal information provides a level of protection of the information equivalent to that which the party is required to provide.
- Require the privacy officer of a party or their delegate to attend at least one meeting per year on the protection of personal information held by the CEO.
- Prohibit the party or its representatives from providing false or misleading information about the purposes for which the party collects personal information.
- Prohibit the party or its representatives from selling personal information under the party's control.
- Prohibit the party or its representatives from disclosing personal information to the public for the purpose of causing harm.

New sections 446.6(2) and 446.6(3) of the CEA (clause 36(2)) respectively set out the factors for determining whether a breach of security safeguards creates a real risk of significant harm and define what constitutes "significant harm."

2.1.12 Conspiracy or Attempt to Commit, Being an Accessory After the Fact or Counselling to Commit a Contravention of the *Canada Elections Act* (Clauses 44, 64, 65, 71 to 77, 82 and 83)

Clauses 44, 64, 65, 71 to 77, 82 and 83 expand the scope of several violations and offences to include conspiracy or attempt to commit, being an accessory after the fact or counselling to commit such violations or offences. Related powers are also granted

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to the CCE in this regard, and the provisions of the CEA relating to prosecutions are amended. Notably, and by way of example:

- Under new sections 508.1(b) to 508.1(d) of the CEA, enacted by clause 65, the scope of the administrative monetary penalties regime applicable to certain violations is extended to include conspiracy or attempt to commit, being an accessory after the fact or counselling to commit a violation of the CEA. Clause 65 also amends this regime to extend its scope to other prohibitions, whether new or existing.
- Section 511 of the CEA authorizes the CCE to institute a prosecution or cause one to be instituted if the CCE believes on reasonable grounds that an offence under the CEA has been committed. Clause 73 expands the scope of section 511 of the CEA to authorize the CCE to institute a prosecution if the CCE believes on reasonable grounds that there has been a conspiracy or an attempt to commit an offence, or that a person or entity has been an accessory after the fact or has counselled to commit such an offence.

2.1.13 New and Expanded Prohibitions and Offences

2.1.13.1 Expanding the Scope of Certain Offences to Apply Outside Canada (Clause 46)

Currently, the offences set out in sections 480 (obstruction of electoral process and public meetings), 480.1 (impersonation), 481 (misleading publications), 482 (unauthorized use of a computer) and 482.1 (obstruction) of the CEA apply only within Canada. Clause 46 expands the scope of these prohibitions by enacting new section 479.1, which specifies that sections 480 to 482.1 of the CEA apply inside and outside Canada. New section 479.1 also applies to the offence set out in new section 482.01 of the CEA (false statements), created by clause 51.

2.1.13.2 Expanding the Scope of the Impersonation Offence to Include Deepfakes (Clause 48)

Current section 480.1 of the CEA provides for an offence of impersonation by prohibiting a person from falsely representing themselves, or causing a person to falsely represent themselves, with intent to mislead, as a stakeholder in the electoral process, including the CEO or a candidate. The bill expands the scope of this prohibition to include deepfakes.

Accordingly, clause 48 adds new paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) to section 480.1(1) of the CEA to specify that the offence applies to the creation, distribution, transmission and publication of **images or imitations or audio recordings** likely to be attributed to a stakeholder in the electoral process. The list of individuals whom it is prohibited to

impersonate is also expanded, notably to include nomination and leadership contestants. **PROC made minor amendments to the English version of clause 48 of the bill.**

2.1.13.3 Expanding the Scope of the Offence Relating to Misleading Publications (Clause 49)

Current section 481 of the CEA makes it an offence for a person or entity to distribute, transmit or publish any material falsely appearing to originate from various electoral stakeholders, including the CEO or a candidate. Clause 49 amends the offence so that it applies at all times, rather than just during the election period. The bill also expands the list of individual electoral stakeholders to include the CCE, nomination contestants, potential candidates and leadership contestants.

2.1.13.4 Expanding the Scope of the Offence Relating to the Unauthorized Use of a Computer (Clause 50)

Section 482 of the CEA provides for an offence for a person or entity that fraudulently uses a computer with the intention of affecting the results of an election. Clause 50 expands the scope of this offence; the fraudulent use of a computer with the intention of disrupting the conduct of an election, not only its results, will now constitute an offence. The scope of this offence is also extended to nomination contests and leadership contests.

2.1.13.5 New Offence Relating to False Statement (Clauses 51 and 62)

Clause 51 creates a new offence relating to false statements pertaining to certain aspects of the electoral process. The government indicates that this measure is intended to counter election disinformation.[17] New section 482.01 of the CEA prohibits the making or publishing, with the intention of affecting the results or disrupting the conduct of an election, a statement that is known to be false or misleading in respect of any of the following:

- who may vote;
- the process by which an individual may register to vote;
- the manner in which an individual may exercise the right to vote (e.g., where, when, or the manner of voting at an advance poll or by special ballot);
- whom an individual may vote for;

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- the process by which an individual becomes a candidate; or
- the process by which votes at an election are counted or the results are validated, and the results themselves.

Under section 500(5), as amended by clause 62(2), the offence relating to false statements constitutes a hybrid intentional offence, subject to fines and imprisonment.

2.1.13.6 Prohibitions in Relation to Third Party Advertising, Partisan Activities and Election Surveys (Clauses 55 to 58, 62)

The bill establishes a series of offences related to the new prohibitions set forth in Part 17 of the CEA (third party advertising, partisan activities and election surveys). The penalties applicable to these new offences are set forth in section 62 (section 500 of the CEA, as amended).

Current section 495.21 of the CEA sets out sets out a series of offences relating to the use of foreign funds by third parties, in violation of Division 0.1 of Part 17 of the CEA. Clause 55(1) creates new section 495.21(01) and 495.21(02) of the CEA, establishing offences for foreign entities that make prohibited contributions (new section 349.012 of the CEA), or that circumvent this prohibition or collude to circumvent it (new section 349.013 of the CEA). Such contraventions constitute a strict liability offence, punishable on summary conviction, but willful contravention constitutes a hybrid offence.

Clause 55(2) replaces the offences found under current section 495.21(2) of the CEA to provide for a hybrid offence for third parties knowingly using foreign contributions in contravention of new section 349.02, or that knowingly circumvent or collude to circumvent the prohibition on the use of foreign contributions in contravention of new section 349.03.

New section 495.22 of the CEA is created by clause 56. New section 495.22(1) of the CEA provides that a contravention of new section 349.04 or 349.05 constitutes a strict liability offence, punishable on summary conviction. However, under new section 495.22(2) of the CEA, a willful contravention of section 349.05 constitutes a hybrid offence.

Section 495.3(1) of the CEA provides for certain strict liability offences for third parties during the pre-election period, punishable on summary conviction. Clause 57 adds the contraventions in section 349.95(1) of the CEA on expenses limitation to this list of offences.

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Section 496(1) of the CEA provides for certain strict liability offences for third parties during the election period, punishable on summary conviction. Clause 58 adds the contraventions to section 358(1) of the CEA on expenses limitation to this list of offences.

2.1.14 Amendments to the Administrative Monetary Penalty Regime (Clauses 65 to 68 and 80)

The administrative monetary penalty regime is amended by clause 65 to encompass a greater number of violations and to cover other forms of participation in a violation (amended section 508.1 of the CEA).

Under section 508.5(1) of the CEA, the maximum administrative monetary penalty for a violation is $1,500 in the case of an individual, and $5,000 in the case of a corporation or entity. These maximums are subject to an exception that applies to a contravention of section 363 (contributions) or 367 (contribution limits) of the CEA. Clause 67 increases the maximum to $25,000 for individuals and to $100,000 for corporations or entities. It also expands the exceptions to these maximums for a number of violations.

Section 508.6 of the CEA, which lists the criteria to be considered in determining the amount of the penalty, is amended to add whether the violation was committed by a foreign entity or at the direction of or in association with a foreign entity (new section 508.6(1)(b.1) of the CEA, as amended by clause 68).

Under section 521.14 of the CEA, a person served with a notice of violation resulting in an administrative monetary penalty may request a review of the alleged violation or the amount of the penalty, or both. The request for review must be made to the CCE if the penalty is $500 or less for an individual and $1,500 or less for a corporation or an entity; for amounts exceeding those thresholds, the request for review must be made to the CEO. Clause 80 amends section 521.14 to increase these thresholds to $8,500 for an individual and $30,000 for a corporation or entity, respectively.

2.1.15 Expanded Powers of the Commissioner of Canada Elections (Clauses 69 to 71 and 72)

Section 509.22 of the CEA provides that the CCE, if they consider it in the public interest, may take any measures, including incurring expenses. Clause 69 adds a second paragraph to section 509.22 to specify that the CCE may, in the exercise of or performance of their powers, duties and functions, may enter into memoranda of understanding or other arrangements with departments or bodies that have technical or specialized knowledge on matters of national security or other matters.

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New section 510.002, enacted by clause 70, provides that, in conducting an investigation into a violation subject to an administrative monetary penalty, the CCE or the CCE's representative may summon persons and require them to give oral or written evidence on oath, and require persons to preserve or produce any documents or other things the CCE considers relevant for the investigation. The CCE may also administer oaths.

Under section 510.01(1) of the CEA, a judge, on application of the CCE or their representative, may, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been or will be a contravention of the CEA, order an individual likely to have information to attend or to make a written return under oath. In addition to amendments relating to other alternative forms of involvement in a contravention, clause 71 creates section 510.01(1)(a.1) and 510.01(1)(a.2) of the CEA, which state that a judge may order the preservation or production to the CCE or their representative of records or other items mentioned in the order.

Section 510.1 of the CEA provides for the confidentiality of information relating to an investigation, as well as the conditions under which the CCE or a person acting under the CCE's authority may disclose certain information (e.g., information required by the Director of Public Prosecutions in the context of a prosecution, information in the public interest, etc.). Clause 72(3) creates new sections 510.1(4) and 510.1(5) of the CEA, which specify that the CCE or any person acting under the CCE's direction, may disclose information relating to an investigation to a foreign government, an international organization or an institution of such government or organization, subject to certain conditions.

2.1.16 Application of Amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* (Clause 87)

Under section 554(1) of the CEA, amendments to the Act do not apply to elections called within six months following their enactment, unless a notice to the contrary is published by the CEO in the *Canada Gazette*. Clause 87 of the bill, the scope of which was expanded by PROC, provides that despite section 554(1) of the CEA, the vast majority of the amendments set out in the bill would apply in an election for which the writ is issued within six months after Bill C-25 receives Royal Assent.

2.2 PART 2 – AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF CERTAIN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, 2026 (CLAUSES 88 AND 89)

Clause 88 enacts An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026. According to the preamble of this new Act, members of the House of Commons proposed the changes for the electoral districts they represent. **Initially, the bill**

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changed the names of 19 federal electoral districts; following PROC amendments, the number of renamed districts is now 17. The amendments the committee made to clause 88 stem from requests by the Members representing the electoral districts in question.[18]

Clauses 88.1 and 88.2 of the bill, resulting from amendments proposed by the committee, make consequential amendments to Schedule 3 of the CEA to reflect the name changes of certain electoral districts. Schedule 3 of the CEA lists the electoral districts in large or remote areas for which the number of elector signatures required to be a candidate is lower.

Clause 89 **of the bill** provides that An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026 **and the consequential amendments to the CEA** come into force on the 90th day after the day on which Bill C-25 is enacted.

NOTES

1. **Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026, 45th Parliament, 1st session.**
2. **Department of Justice, *Charter Statement: Bill C-25: An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts*.**
3. **Senate, Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *The subject matter of Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026*, Eighth Report, 4 June 2026.**
4. **Senate, Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026, without amendment but with observations*, Twelfth Report, 18 June 2026.**
5. *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9.
6. Elections Canada, *Meeting New Challenges: Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada following the 43rd and 44th General Elections*, 7 June 2022; and Commissioner of Canada Elections, *Recommendations Report: 2019 and 2021 General Elections*, 7 June 2022.
7. According to the government, these amendments respond, in whole or in part, to recommendations 31, 40 to 43 and 49 of the Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. See The Honourable Marie-Josée Hogue, Commissioner, *Volume 5: Chapter 19 – Recommendations to Better Protect Against Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Institutions and Processes*, Final report, Public Inquiry Into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions, 28 January 2025; and Democratic Institutions, *Strong and Free Elections Act – Amendments to the* Canada Elections Act, Backgrounder.
8. House of Commons, Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC), *Becoming a Candidate in an Election: A Review of the Criteria*, Twentieth report, March 2026.
9. Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, 44th Parliament, 1st Session.
10. Democratic Institutions, *Strong and Free Elections Act – Amendments to the* Canada Elections Act, Backgrounder.
11. **PROC, *Evidence*, 45th Parliament, 1st Session, meeting 35, 28 May 2026.**
12. "Interpretation," *Foreign Interference and Security of Information Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. O-5. This law was amended in 2024 by former Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign interference.
13. "Cryptoasset" is defined as "a digital asset protected by cryptographic measures."

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14. Elections Canada, *Security Expenses of Registered Parties, Candidates and Contestants*, Interpretation Note: 2024-05, February 2025; and Elections Canada, *Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents (EC 20155) – June 2026*.

15. PROC, *Evidence*, 45th Parliament, 1st Session, Meeting 36, 2 June 2026.

16. *Making Life More Affordable for Canadians Act*, S.C. 2026, c. 2. For more information, consult Laurence Brosseau et al., *Legislative Summary of Bill C-4: An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure*, Publication no. 45-1-C4-E, Library of Parliament, 16 June 2025.

17. Democratic Institutions, *Strong and Free Elections Act – Amendments to the* Canada Elections Act, Backgrounder.

18. PROC, *Evidence*, 45th Parliament, 1st Session, Meeting 36, 2 June 2026.