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Accurate as of May 2026

Campaign Finance Law Treatment of Security Spending for State Officials

In recent years, reports of threats and violence against elected officials have prompted states to examine whether their campaign finance laws permit candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds for personal security. In September 2024, the Federal Election Commission [codified rules](#) explicitly allowing federal candidates and officeholders to spend campaign funds on security (including home systems, surveillance equipment, and security personnel) when the need arises directly from their official role and would not exist otherwise. Several states have since addressed the same question through enacted law, ethics commission rulings, and legislation.

After incidents of violence against elected and political figures in 2025, leaders across the South have sought to address this growing concern to ensure state officials are protected. Below are some examples from Southern states.

Enacted Laws

- Alabama [SB 230](#), enacted this session, expressly authorizes campaign funds to be used for security expenses protecting a candidate, an elected official, or the immediate family or staff of a candidate or elected official. Permitted expenses include cybersecurity services, nonstructural security devices such as locks, alarms, motion detectors, and security cameras, and security personnel.[Text Wrapping Break]
- Kentucky [HB 136](#), also enacted this session, explicitly authorizes candidates and officeholders to spend campaign funds on reasonable security measures, including hardware such as locks, cameras, and alarm systems; professional personnel; structural upgrades; and cybersecurity software. The legislation built on a [2025 advisory opinion](#) from the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance.[Text Wrapping Break]
- Louisiana's [campaign finance law](#) permits candidates, elected officials, family members, and campaign staff to use campaign funds for security expenses, such as locks, alarms, cameras, gates, fencing, security lighting, professional security personnel, and cybersecurity services. Structural improvements qualify only if solely for security and they do not add to the property's value.

Ethics Rulings

- The Arkansas Ethics Commission's [Advisory Opinion 22-EC-002](#) permits campaign funds to be used for security for the candidate, immediate family, and staff in threat-based circumstances. The opinion allowed security at campaign events, campaign headquarters, and at home where specific targeted threats existed.
- An [Advisory Opinion 2025-02](#) from Oklahoma's Ethics Commission extends the same standard to all state officeholders, determining that an officeholder must need security “to respond to dangers or threats related to the office held, and not simply for security that any member of the public would need.” The opinion followed a bipartisan [request](#) from legislative leaders in [both chambers](#).
- South Carolina's House Legislative Ethics Committee adopted [Advisory Opinion 2026-1](#), finding that House members may use campaign funds to equip their personal residences with reasonable security measures during their



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term of office and identifying permissible expenses such as alarm systems, cameras, and other items. However, coverage does not extend to permanent fixtures or home modifications that would increase property value. Any security equipment purchased with campaign funds must be treated as a campaign asset and disposed of when the member leaves office.

- Texas has permitted judicial officeholders to use campaign funds for home security expenses since 2021, when the Texas Ethics Commission issued [Advisory Opinion 567](#), which dictates that expenses such as security cameras, motion-sensor lights, reinforced locks, and related hardware are permissible when the need for those measures arises from an officeholder's duties and would not have been incurred but for their official status.
- *Note: While Georgia has not yet taken formal action, Georgia's ethics commission issued a [ruling in 2014](#) prohibiting the use of campaign funds for home security systems. The commission was actively reconsidering [as of 2021](#) but has not issued a final ruling.*

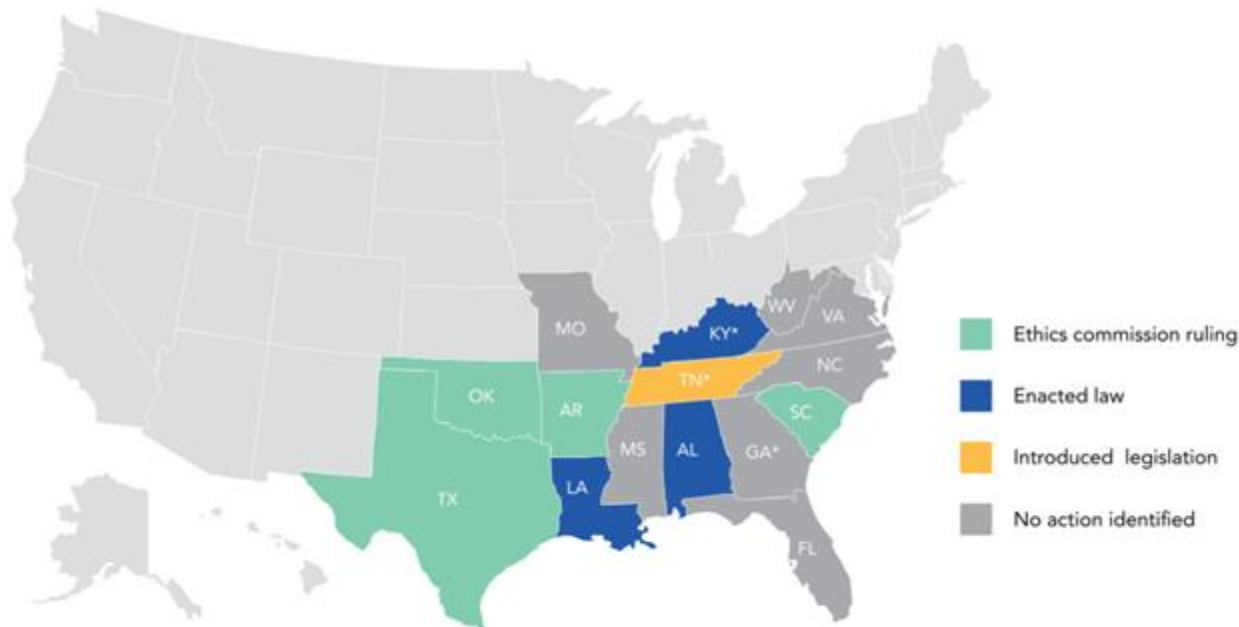
Introduced Legislation



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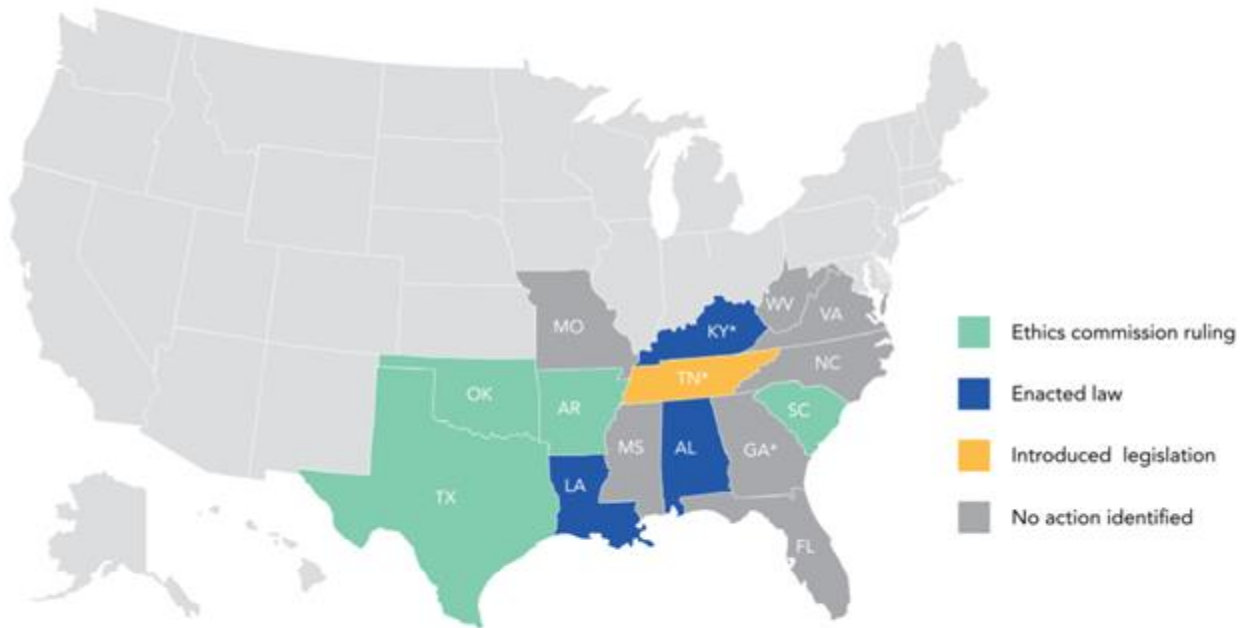
States Permitting the Use of Campaign Funds for Security Expenditures in Southern States



Data as of April 28, 2026. Map reflects action permitting the use of campaign funds for personal security expenses by candidates and officeholders in southern states. States shown as "No action identified" may have enacted statutes, informal guidance, pending legislation not captured here. Notes (*): Kentucky has both enacted law and an ethics commission ruling; because the enacted law came later, it is included in that category. Georgia's ethics commission issued a restrictive ruling on this question in 2014 and was reconsidering its position as of 2021; no permissive ruling has been identified. Tennessee legislation did not advance before the legislature adjourned.



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Tennessee, legislation was introduced ([SB 2320](#) / [HB 2045](#)) in the 2026 session that would expressly authorize candidates and officeholders to use campaign funds for security measures. The bills did not advance before the legislature adjourned.

Sources

- Federal Election Commission, [Use of Campaign Funds for Candidate and Officeholder Security, 11 CFR Part 113](#) (September 2024).
- Alabama Legislature, [SB 230](#) (2026 Regular Session).
- Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, [HB 136](#) (2026 Regular Session).
- Kentucky Registry of Election Finance, [Advisory Opinion 2025-003](#) (2025).
- Louisiana Legislature, [La. Rev. Stat. § 18:1505.2](#) (as amended by Acts 2025, No. 398, eff. June 20, 2025).
- Arkansas Ethics Commission, [Advisory Opinion 22-EC-002](#) (2022).



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- Oklahoma Ethics Commission, [Advisory Opinion 2025-02](#) (August 14, 2025).
- Oklahoma Voice, [Ethics Commission to issue opinion on security for elected officials](#) (July 10, 2025).
- Oklahoma Senate, [Legislative Leaders Applaud Ethics Commission Opinion on Campaign Funds for Security](#) (August 14, 2025).
- South Carolina House Legislative Ethics Committee, [Advisory Opinion 2026-1](#) (March 26, 2026).
- Texas Ethics Commission, [Ethics Advisory Opinion No. 567](#) (September 1, 2021).
- Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission, [Meeting Agenda](#) (March 26, 2015).
- Georgia Recorder, [Protection against violent threats could be legit Georgia campaign expense](#) (October 1, 2021).
- Tennessee General Assembly, [SB 2320](#) / [HB 2045](#) (2026 Regular Session).