

Assembly Bill No. 1676

CHAPTER 865

An act to amend Section 17538.4 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to advertising.

[Approved by Governor September 26, 1998. Filed
with Secretary of State September 28, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1676, Bowen. Advertising: electronic mail.

Existing law prohibits a person conducting business in this state from faxing unsolicited advertising material, unless certain conditions are satisfied.

This bill would expand that prohibition to include the transmission of unsolicited advertising by electronic mail (e-mail), and would make several related changes.

This bill would become inoperative if federal law on this subject is enacted.

Existing law provides for the regulation of advertising and provides that a violation of those provisions is a crime. This bill, by creating additional prohibitions with regard to advertising, would expand the scope of an existing crime, thereby imposing a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 17538.4 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

17538.4. (a) No person or entity conducting business in this state shall facsimile (fax) or cause to be faxed, or electronically mail (e-mail) or cause to be e-mailed, documents consisting of unsolicited advertising material for the lease, sale, rental, gift offer, or other disposition of any realty, goods, services, or extension of credit unless:

(1) In the case of a fax, that person or entity establishes a toll-free telephone number that a recipient of the unsolicited faxed documents may call to notify the sender not to fax the recipient any further unsolicited documents.



(2) In the case of e-mail, that person or entity establishes a toll-free telephone number or valid sender operated return e-mail address that the recipient of the unsolicited documents may call or e-mail to notify the sender not to e-mail any further unsolicited documents.

(b) All unsolicited faxed or e-mailed documents subject to this section shall include a statement informing the recipient of the toll-free telephone number that the recipient may call, or a valid return address to which the recipient may write or e-mail, as the case may be, notifying the sender not to fax or e-mail the recipient any further unsolicited documents to the fax number, or numbers, or e-mail address, or addresses, specified by the recipient.

In the case of faxed material, the statement shall be in at least nine-point type. In the case of e-mail, the statement shall be the first text in the body of the message and shall be of the same size as the majority of the text of the message.

(c) Upon notification by a recipient of his or her request not to receive any further unsolicited faxed or e-mailed documents, no person or entity conducting business in this state shall fax or cause to be faxed or e-mail or cause to be e-mailed any unsolicited documents to that recipient.

(d) In the case of e-mail, this section shall apply when the unsolicited e-mailed documents are delivered to a California resident via an electronic mail service provider's service or equipment located in this state. For these purposes "electronic mail service provider" means any business or organization qualified to do business in this state that provides individuals, corporations, or other entities the ability to send or receive electronic mail through equipment located in this state and that is an intermediary in sending or receiving electronic mail.

(e) As used in this section, "unsolicited e-mailed documents" means any e-mailed document or documents consisting of advertising material for the lease, sale, rental, gift offer, or other disposition of any realty, goods, services, or extension of credit that meet both of the following requirements:

(1) The documents are addressed to a recipient with whom the initiator does not have an existing business or personal relationship.

(2) The documents are not sent at the request of, or with the express consent of, the recipient.

(f) As used in this section, "fax" or "cause to be faxed" or "e-mail" or "cause to be e-mailed" does not include or refer to the transmission of any documents by a telecommunications utility or Internet service provider to the extent that the telecommunications utility or Internet service provider merely carries that transmission over its network.

(g) In the case of e-mail that consists of unsolicited advertising material for the lease, sale, rental, gift offer, or other disposition of any realty, goods, services, or extension of credit, the subject line of each and every message shall include "ADV:" as the first four characters.



If these messages contain information that consists of unsolicited advertising material for the lease, sale, rental, gift offer, or other disposition of any realty, goods, services, or extension of credit, that may only be viewed, purchased, rented, leased, or held in possession by an individual 18 years of age and older, the subject line of each and every message shall include “ADV:ADLT” as the first eight characters.

(h) An employer who is the registered owner of more than one e-mail address may notify the person or entity conducting business in this state e-mailing or causing to be e-mailed, documents consisting of unsolicited advertising material for the lease, sale, rental, gift offer, or other disposition of any realty, goods, services, or extension of credit of the desire to cease e-mailing on behalf of all of the employees who may use employer-provided and employer-controlled e-mail addresses.

(i) This section, or any part of this section, shall become inoperative on and after the date that federal law is enacted that prohibits or otherwise regulates the transmission of unsolicited advertising by electronic mail (e-mail).

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

Notwithstanding Section 17580 of the Government Code, unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this act shall become operative on the same date that the act takes effect pursuant to the California Constitution.

