

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESHB 1268**

**AS OF MARCH 31, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Creating a program of voluntary campaign spending limits for state offices.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Dunshee, Wolfe, Linville, Riley, Quall, Grant, Pruitt, Romero, R. Meyers, Zellinsky, Eide, Voloria, Karahalios, Brough, Brown, Kessler, Edmondson and Finkbeiner)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE**

**Staff:** Alan Caplan (786-7465)

**Hearing Dates:** April 2, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Initiative 134, which was approved by Washington voters on November 3, 1992, among other things imposed limits on campaign contributions to candidates for state office. The stated purposes of the initiative were (1) to give individuals and interest groups equal opportunities to influence elective and governmental processes, (2) to reduce the influence of large organizational contributors, and (3) to restore public trust in governmental institutions and the electoral process.

Some groups interested in campaign issues have argued that Initiative 134 is unlikely to fully achieve these goals, in part because it does not limit campaign spending. These groups have maintained that, so long as campaign spending remains unchecked, special interests will have the opportunity to unduly influence the legislative process, and people of modest means will be discouraged from seeking public office.

**SUMMARY:**

The Public Disclosure Commission must adopt recommended spending limits for candidates for state executive and legislative offices. With certain exceptions, the commission must base its recommended spending limits on the average amount spent by the top two candidates for each office in the 1992 general election. The commission must adjust its recommended limits biennially beginning in 1995 to reflect inflationary changes.

Each candidate seeking an office for which a recommended spending limit has been established may file with the

commission a promise that the candidate will stay within the limit. A candidate who violates his or her promise commits a violation of the public disclosure law. The commission must announce the availability of a list of candidates who have filed promises in a timely manner and must periodically publish a list identifying candidates who have executed, but not violated, a binding promise.

The Secretary of State must add to each candidates' pamphlet a list of the spending limits recommended by the commission for the offices which appear in the pamphlet and an explanation of the effect of a promise filed with the commission regarding those limits. Along with the statement or photograph of each candidate in the pamphlet, the secretary must add a prominent notice stating whether the candidate has agreed to abide by the applicable voluntary spending limit.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested