

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

BilNo. HB 1282

Disclosingaidpetitiongathering  
Brieftitle

PublicArg: 2/19/97

Reps.Ogden/Carlson/Constantine  
Sponsor

StaffContact S. Lundin  
Comm. on Govt.Admin.  
Phone:786-7127

**BACKGROUND:**

The State Constitution authorizes state voters powers of initiative and referendum on state legislative Statutes implement this authority and describe the appearance of initiative and referendum petitions Various crimes relating to the state initiative and referendum process are established in statute including class felony and various gross misdemeanors.

State voters approved Initiative Measure No. 276 in 1972 establishing the Public Disclosure Act. Among other requirements the Public Disclosure Act requires political committees to file periodic reports to the Public Disclosure Commission detailing their expenditures The frequency of reports that a political committee is required to file increases as the election approaches that is associated with the political committee's efforts The Public Disclosure Act requires political committee to keep books of accounts current and that the books of accounts be available for public inspection during the eight days immediately prior to the election associated with the political committee's efforts.

A political committee is defined as a person other than a candidate or individual dealing with his or her own funds or property that has the expectation of receiving contributions or makes expenditures in support or opposition to any candidate or any ballot proposition.

A state voters pamphlet is prepared for each general election that includes a description of statewide ballot measures and arguments for and against each of these measures.

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**SUMMARY:**

Each state initiative or referendum petition where persons are being paid to solicit signatures on the petition must include a statement at the top of the petition that paid signature gatherers are being used and indicate the name of the group that is paying to circulate the petitions. Any petition for the same measure, where paid signature gatherers are not being used to solicit signatures, is not required to contain this notice.

Crimes relating to initiative and referendum petitions are expanded. It is a gross misdemeanor for a person to circulate or procure signatures on a state initiative or referendum petition that fails to meet the requirements detailed in state law, including where applicable the requirement that a statement be included if compensation is being provided to persons to circulate the petition and the name of the group paying for the petition to be circulated.

The state voters pamphlet must include a statement indicating the percent of the signatures on any state initiative or referendum measure that were included on petitions where paid signature gatherers were used, if consideration was provided for soliciting or procuring signatures on the measure.

The Public Disclosure Act is amended to require that in addition to existing reporting and accounting requirements, political committees that pay compensation for circulating state initiative or referendum petitions must:

- File reports on the twenty-first day and seventh day immediately prior to the date the petitions must be filed and on the 10th of the month after petitions are filed and
- Keep its books of accounts current and available for public inspection eight days immediately before the last date the petitions may be filed.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Not Requested.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bills passed.