

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

Bill No. HB 1343

Lobbying activities/taxpayer reported agencies
Brief title

Public Arg: 2/26/97

Reps. Mielke/Mulliken/Talcott
Sponsor

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BACKGROUND:

The Public Disclosure Act requires state agencies and local governments to make quarterly reports of their lobbying activities. Public employees or officials who restrict their lobbying to no more than four days in any three-month period and elected officials who do "in-person lobbying" are not required to report these activities under the Public Disclosure Act, if the total expenditures of "nonpublic funds" for any lobbying purpose does not exceed \$15 during a three-month period.

The Public Disclosure Act prohibits the direct or indirect use of public funds for lobbying purposes. However, officers and employees may communicate with a legislator on the request of that legislator and, through proper channels may communicate requests for legislative action or appropriations necessary for the efficient conduct of public business or in the proper performance of their official duties.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature affirms that it is given the sole constitutional duty to establish public policy by enacting state laws and that the executive branch of state government is vested with executive authority to see that the laws enacted by the Legislature are faithfully executed. The Legislature finds that lobbying activities at public expense to influence the public decision-making process in the Legislature should be restricted and that this restriction will reduce the cost of maintaining efficient government and restore representative government to the people.

It is the intent of the Legislature to restrict lobbying activities at public expense by state agencies or units of local government and to consolidate such activities in the Office of the Governor.

Cont.

A state agency or unit of local government and an employee of such an entity or a person under contract by such an entity may not communicate orally or in writing to members of the Legislature or legislative staff to advocate or oppose the formation, modification, or adoption of legislation and may not motivate others to contact members of the Legislature or legislative staff for such purposes.

This prohibition does not apply to:

- Communications made outside of regular working hours as private citizens without the use of public facilities or supplies to prepare testimony or materials.
- Providing factual information to members of the Legislature or legislative staff in response to a request made by a member of the Legislature or legislative staff.
- A state-wide elected official and one designated employee of the official.
- The president of an institution of higher education and one designated representative of the president.
- The chief executive officer and one designated representative of:
(1) the Department of Social and Health Services; (2) the Department of Ecology; (3) the Department of Labor and Industries; (4) the Department of Agriculture; (5) the Department of Fish and Wildlife; (6) the Department of Transportation; (7) the Department of Licensing; (8) the Department of General Administration; (9) the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; (10) the Department of Veterans Affairs; (11) the Department of Revenue; (12) the Department of Retirement Services; (13) the Department of Corrections; (14) the Department of Health; and (15) the Department of Financial Institutions.
- An elected official of a local unit of government and one designated representative of each unit of local government.
- One designated employee of each association of units of local government or association of officials of units of local government.

Public entities file reports of their lobbying expenses monthly rather than quarterly.

Each violation of these requirements is a civil infraction punishable by up to \$1,000.

FISCAL NOTE: Not Requested.

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