

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2575

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, February 23, 1998

Title: An act relating to clarification of restrictions on public disclosure commission members' activities.

Brief Description: Clarifying restrictions on public disclosure commission members' activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Pennington, D. Schmidt, Lisk, Skinner, Honeyford, Carlson, Kessler and Mulliken.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 2/23/98 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Anderson, Horn, Patterson and T. Sheldon.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Chapter 42.17 RCW, Washington's public disclosure statute, includes a policy of promoting full disclosure of information relating to political campaigns and lobbying contributions, as well as the financial affairs of elected officials and candidates. This chapter also assures public access to state and local agency records with certain exceptions.

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) is a five-member board appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. PDC members are appointed for five-year terms.

PDC members are prohibited by RCW 42.17.350 from engaging in any of the following activities:

- Holding or campaigning for public office;
- Serving as an officer of any political party or political committee;
- Permitting his or her name to be used in any election campaign;
- Participating in any way in any election campaign; and
- Lobbying or employing or assisting a lobbyist with limited exceptions.

"Public office" is defined by statute to include any federal, state or local elective office. An "election campaign" is defined generally as any campaign supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot proposition.

Summary of Bill: The section establishing the PDC is amended to clarify that the statutory prohibitions apply both within and outside the state of Washington.

PDC members are expressly prohibited from engaging in any of the activities enumerated in RCW 42.17.350, regardless of whether the activity occurs within or outside Washington.

Organizational changes are made to the section. References to appointment and initial terms of PDC members are deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill addresses a loophole in the PDC act. It preserves the integrity of the PDC.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. Pennington.