

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6118

As Passed Senate, February 11, 1998

Title: An act relating to gifts under ethics in public service laws.

Brief Description: Clarifying "gifts" for purposes of ethics in public service.

Sponsors: Senators Long and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/20/98, 1/22/98 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/11/98, 45-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: Technical corrections are needed to clarify the intent in two sections of the ethics in public service laws. The corrections relate to sources of scholarships and to gifts made to guests.

Summary of Bill: Scholarships from public, as well as private, institutions are exempt from the definition of "gift," and can be accepted. The value of gifts to guests is included in the aggregate value of gifts attributed to an officer or employee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Two ambiguities in the ethics law will be removed. It will be clear that payment of fees and travel expenses for educational seminars and conferences by government as well as private nonprofit professional, educational, trade, or charitable associations or institutions is not considered a gift. It will also be clear that the value of a gift to a guest is counted as part of a single gift to the host legislator, officer, or employee. When an independent relationship exists between the donor and the guest, no attribution is required, which was a previously unresolved question.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Jeanine Long, Legislative Ethics Board.