

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6775

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to filing of reports with the public disclosure commission.

Brief Description: Simplifying public disclosure report filing and distributions.

Sponsors: Senators Patterson, Horn, Haugen, Shin, Prentice, Goings, Gardner and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/22/00 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Excuses the filing of reports with county auditors or elections officers when the reports have been filed with the Public Disclosure Commission electronically, or with a city agency.
- Delays the date by which the Public Disclosure Commission must offer electronic filing to lobbyists.
- Imposes electronic filing requirements on candidates and all political committees.
- Delays the date by which candidates and political committees must file electronically and revises the electronic reporting threshold for candidates and political committees.
- Revises the Public Disclosure Commission's accessibility goals with respect to reports filed electronically and non-electronically.
- Requires the Public Disclosure Commission to establish a toll free telephone number.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Campbell, Republican Vice Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunshee; Haigh; Lambert and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) is responsible for collecting and providing public access to reports regarding campaign financing, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates.

I. Reporting Requirements

A continuing political committee is required to file a report with the PDC and the county auditor or elections officer detailing its activities for the preceding month if the committee made expenditures or received contributions exceeding \$200 that month. Candidates, political committees, and treasurers must file a variety of reports with the PDC and the county auditor or elections officer detailing campaign expenditures, campaign contributions, bank deposits, and other election related activities.

II. Electronic Filing

The PDC must offer every candidate, public official, political committee, and party organization the opportunity to file financial affairs reports, contribution reports, and expenditure reports electronically by diskette or via modem, satellite, or the internet. By January 1, 2001, the PDC must offer the same electronic filing option to lobbyists and lobbyists' employers.

Beginning January 1, 2001, each continuing political committee that expended \$10,000 or more in the preceding year, or expects to expend \$10,000 or more in the current year must file all contribution and expenditure reports electronically.

The PDC is required to establish certain access goals with respect to information filed electronically. For reports filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office within two business days, and on the PDC web site within seven business days of receipt. For reports not filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office within four business days, and on the PDC web site within 14 days of physical receipt.

On January 1, 2001, or shortly thereafter, the PDC must revise these goals. For reports filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office and on the PDC web site within two business days of receipt. For reports

not filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office and on the PDC web site within four business days of physical receipt.

Summary of Amended Bill:

I. Reporting Requirements

After January 1, 2002, a political committee, candidate, treasurer electronically filing a report with the PDC does not have to file the report with the county auditor or elections officer. If a city requires that candidates or committees for city offices file reports with a city agency, a candidate or treasurer so filing need not file the report with the county auditor or elections officer.

II. Electronic Filing

The PDC must make available an electronic filing alternative to candidates, public officials, and political committees. The electronic filing alternative must include, but is not limited to filing by diskette, modem, satellite, or the internet. The electronic filing alternative must be available to lobbyists and lobbyists' employers by January 1, 2002.

The entities to whom the electronic filing requirements apply are expanded to include candidates and all political committees. Beginning January 1, 2002, each candidate or political committee that expended \$25,000 or more in the preceding year, or expects to expend \$25,000 or more in the current year must use the electronic filing alternative. Beginning January 1, 2004, each candidate or political committee that expended \$10,000 or more in the preceding year, or expects to expend \$10,000 or more in the current year must use the electronic filing alternative. These requirements do not apply if the candidate does not have the necessary technology.

The January 1, 2001 accessibility goals are changed. For reports filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office within two business days, and on the PDC web site within four business days of receipt. For reports not filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office within four business days, and on the PDC web site within seven business days of physical receipt.

On January 1, 2002, or shortly thereafter, the PDC must again revise the goals. For reports filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office and on the PDC web site within two business days of receipt. For reports not filed electronically, the PDC must attempt to make the reports available in the PDC office and on the PDC web site within four business days of physical receipt.

The PDC is required to establish a toll-free telephone number.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill exempts from the electronic filing requirements candidates who do not have the necessary technology to comply.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill makes the time lines for electronic filing and access more realistic and attainable. The bill also requires candidates to file electronically, which brings Washington in line with 37 other states. The higher dollar limit for when candidates need to file electronically is appropriate because campaigns spending more money will probably have access to the necessary technology.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Patterson, prime sponsor; and Vicki Rippie, Public Disclosure Commission.