

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6775

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Simplifying public disclosure report filing and distributions.

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

Senate Committee on State & Local Government

House Committee on State Government

Background: The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created and empowered by initiative of the people in 1972 to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates, and to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions. It applies to political activities at the federal, state, county, city, town, school district, port district, special district, or other state political subdivision levels.

Continuing political committees must file monthly with the commission and the county auditor or elections officer a report of total contributions received or total expenditures made exceeding \$200.

Candidates and political committees must file certain reports with the commission and the county auditor or elections officer at regular intervals specified by statute.

By January 1, 2001, the commission must have an electronic filing alternative available to lobbyists and lobbyists' employers.

Beginning January 1, 2001, a continuing political committee that expended \$10,000 or more in the preceding or current year must file its reports electronically.

A candidate or his or her treasurer must maintain books of account accurately reflecting all contributions and expenditures. The books of account must be open for public inspection for at least two consecutive hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the eighth day immediately before the election and by appointment for inspections between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on any other day from the seventh day through the day immediately before the election. Continuing political committees also have inspection requirements for their books of account.

In 1999, the law required that the commission establish goals for public access to its records. The goal for reports filed electronically is accessibility at the commission's office within two business days of receipt and accessibility on the commission's web site within seven business days of receipt. For reports submitted other than electronically, the goal is accessibility at the commission's office within four business days of receipt and accessibility on the commission's web site within 14 business days of receipt.

On or about January 1, 2001, the accessibility goals must be revised to shorter intervals between receipt and availability. Reports submitted electronically must be accessible in the commission's office and on its web site within two business days of receipt. Reports submitted other than electronically must be accessible at the commission's office and on its web site within four business days of receipt.

Summary: After January 1, 2001, no filing with the county auditor or elections officer is required if the committee filed with the commission electronically.

If a city requires that candidates or committees for city offices file reports with a city agency, no report with the county auditor or elections officer is required.

The commission must make the electronic filing alternative available to lobbyists and lobbyists' employers by January 1, 2002.

Beginning January 1, 2002, a candidate or political committee that expended \$25,000 or more in the preceding or current year must file its reports electronically. Beginning January 1, 2004, the electronic filing threshold drops to \$10,000. The Public Disclosure Commission may make case-by-case exceptions to these requirements for candidates whose committees do not have the technological ability to file electronically.

When the eighth day before an election falls on a legal holiday, the books of account for a candidate must be available for two consecutive hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the seventh day; however, the books do not also have to be available by appointment on that seventh day under this circumstance. Inspection requirements for books of account of a continuing political committee are made the same as for a candidate.

The January 1, 2001 accessibility goal is modified to require electronic filings to be accessible in the commission's office within two business days of receipt and on the web site within four business days of receipt. Reports submitted other than electronically must be accessible in the commission's office within four business days of receipt and on the web site within seven business days of receipt.

The revision of accessibility goals is additionally required on or about January 1, 2002. These goals must require electronic filings to be accessible in the commission's office and on its web site within two business days of receipt. Reports submitted other than electronically must be accessible in the commission's office and on its web site within four business days of receipt.

The commission must offer political committees and residents of the state both a regular and a toll-free telephone number by which to make contact.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	42	6	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate concurred in part)
House	97	1	(House receded in part)
House	98	0	(House reconsidered)
Senate	37	7	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 8, 2000