

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2320

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to reporting contributions under the public disclosure act.

Brief Description: Regarding campaign contributions.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Schmidt, Romero, McMorris, Santos, Miloscia, Kessler, Haigh and Edwards; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/24/02, 1/29/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the day for filing weekly Public Disclosure Commission contribution reports from Friday to Monday, and amends the definitions of "general election" and "primary" to restrict their application to the contribution limits section of statute.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Romero, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Act (PDA) was enacted following passage of Initiative 276 in 1972. Among the stated purposes of the legislation was an intent to make information on political campaign and lobbying contributions available to the public. With a few exceptions, the requirements of the initiative applied to all election campaigns. The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134 in 1992. The latter initiative imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for state office. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) is responsible for enforcing the laws relating to

personal financial affairs reporting, lobbyist reporting, campaign finance reporting, campaign contribution limits, and independent expenditure reporting.

Current statute requires that the treasurer of a political campaign or committee is required to file a report with the PDC and the appropriate county elections officer listing the names of contributors and amounts contributed. Those who contribute \$25 or less do not need to be named. The reports are filed every Friday beginning on the first day of the month four months preceding the special or general election and ending on the day of the election.

The campaign finance reporting requirements enacted by the 1972 initiative apply to all elections, state and local. However, the campaign contribution limits enacted in the 1992 initiative and codified in RCW 42.17.640 apply only to elections for state office. Included in the 1992 initiative were definitions for "general election" and "primary election" that refer to the election or nomination of a person for state office. These definitions were intended to apply only to those sections of law enacted by that initiative, which only applied to campaign contribution limits on elections for state office. However, as codified in RCW 42.17, the definitions could be interpreted to apply to the entire PDA, including those sections that apply to local elections.

Summary of Bill:

The due date for weekly reports of contributions is moved from Friday to Monday.

The definitions of "general election" and "primary election" are restricted to refer only to the section of law that imposes campaign contribution limits on elections for state office, RCW 42.17.640.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Extending the filing day until Monday gives the candidates a few extra days to file reports. It will not hamper the Public Disclosure Commission's ability to report this information to the public, particularly since electronic filing of reports is now possible. The definition of "general" and "primary" elections in the bill applies to the section of statute for contributions limits.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McDermott, prime sponsor; and Vicki Rippie, Public Disclosure Commission.