
State Government Committee

HB 2572

Brief Description: Limiting campaign contributions in certain localities.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Campbell, Miloscia, Schmidt, Veloria, Hunt, Benson, Upthegrove and McDermott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Imposes campaign contribution limits on elections for county office in counties with over 200,000 registered voters.
- Imposes campaign contribution limits on elections for port district commissioners in port districts with over 200,000 registered voters.

Hearing Date: 2/7/02

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 276 in 1972. The initiative created the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), required political campaigns to report the details of contributions and expenditures, and, with a few exceptions, applied to all campaigns for public office. The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134 in 1992. The latter initiative imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for the following state offices: the legislature, governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, commissioner of public lands, insurance commissioner, superintendent of public instruction, state auditor and state treasurer.

The PDC is responsible for providing public access to reports and enforcing the laws relating to personal financial affairs reporting, lobbyist reporting, campaign finance reporting, campaign contribution limits, and independent expenditure reporting. The PDC revises the contribution limits every two years to reflect inflationary changes. The current individual contribution limit for candidates for state legislative office is \$625 per election, and for candidates for other state office is \$1,250 per election. Although some counties and municipalities have imposed campaign contribution limits on local elections, state law does not impose contribution limits on local elections.

Summary of Bill:

Elections for county office in counties with over 200,000 registered voters, and elections for port district commissioners in port districts with over 200,000 registered voters are subject to the same contribution limit imposed on elections for legislative office. Four counties currently have over 200,000 registered voters: King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane. Two port districts currently have over 200,000 registered voters: the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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