

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1294

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, April 2, 2003

Title: An act relating to campaign finance reporting by out-of-state political committees.

Brief Description: Revising campaign finance reporting requirements for out-of-state political committees.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Haigh, Armstrong, Nixon, Miloscia, Dickerson and Mielke; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 4/2/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Horn, Kastama and McCaslin.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) enforces the campaign finance laws for candidates and ballot propositions in state and local elections. Political campaigns must document and report almost all contributions and expenditures in campaign finance reports filed with the PDC at regular intervals.

Federal or out-of-state political committees are not required to file reports with the PDC unless they make a contribution to or an expenditure on behalf of a Washington political committee, which requires them to file a C-5 report with the PDC. Contributions received from federal or out-of-state political committees must be reported by the political committee operating in Washington. If the out-of-state political committee fails to file a C-5 report within 10 days of the contribution, the campaign must forfeit the contribution to the state.

The Federal Elections Commission (FEC) enforces campaign finance laws for candidates in federal elections. The FEC has a number of methods and schedules for political committees to file reports. Those committees that file monthly must list all contributions and expenditures for one month in a report filed by the 20th day of the following month.

Summary of Bill: Washington political committees are no longer required to forfeit contributions from federal or out-of-state political committees. A federal or out-of-state political committee that makes a contribution to or an expenditure on behalf of a Washington political committee must file a report with the PDC by the 20th day of the following month unless it already files regularly with the FEC, in which case it is exempt from the filing requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill ensures that in case of irregularity, the filer is penalized instead of the recipient. The process is streamlined with redundant filings eliminated at no cost to the public's right to know. All federal filings are available on the FEC website. Out-of-state contributors to candidates who do not file with the FEC must still file with the PDC.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Vicki Rippie, PDC.