

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5178

C 265 L 03
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating the legislative international trade account.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Hewitt, T. Sheldon, Rasmussen, Franklin, Shin, Rossi, Hale and B. Sheldon; by request of Lieutenant Governor).

Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade
House Committee on Trade & Economic Development
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Lieutenant Governor participates in trade missions and speaks with dignitaries from other countries regarding international trade issues. The Lieutenant Governor sometimes presents visiting dignitaries and trade mission contacts with hospitality gifts. Legislators and other participants on trade missions may also present hospitality gifts to hosts.

Current law provides that no state officer or employee may accept gifts in excess of \$50, with some exceptions. These exceptions include unsolicited flowers and unsolicited items of nominal value such as pens and notepads.

Summary: The legislative international trade account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Only private funds may be deposited in the account. All funds received by the President of the Senate and the Secretary of State for international trade hosting, trade mission and international relations activities must be deposited in the account.

The Lieutenant Governor, state officers, and state employees may accept gifts in excess of \$50 when those gifts are accepted and solicited for deposit in the legislative international trade account.

Expenditures from the account may only be used for international trade hosting, trade mission and international relations activities, excluding travel and lodging, in which the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, Senators and Representatives participate in an official capacity. Only the Lieutenant Governor may authorize expenditures from the account. If Senators and Representatives want to spend funds from the account, they must have their request approved by the Secretary of the Senate, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, and the Lieutenant Governor.

Individuals or corporations are prohibited from donating more than \$5,000 per year to the international trade account.

When soliciting donations solely for the legislative international trade account, the Lieutenant Governor, state officers, and state employees are presumed to not be in violation of ethics laws regarding solicitations and gifts.

The President of the Senate must provide an annual report of the international trade account activities to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	84	8	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 27, 2003