

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5306

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 25, 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: Senators Roach, Kastama, Horn, Fairley and McCaslin; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/25/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

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. In that case, they must report to 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 report within ten 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 a month in a report filed by the 20th 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 of the following month unless it already files regularly with the FEC, in which case it is exempt from the additional filing requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill eliminates the unfair consequences of forfeiture of donations; eliminates a cumbersome and misleading process; and furthers our goal of fairness and consistency.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Cherie Davidson, League of Women Voters of WA (pro); Mike Connelly, Vicki Rippie, PDC (pro).