

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5390

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, March 4, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to permissible uses of state resources by elected officials with regard to ballot propositions.

**Brief Description:** Regarding permissible uses of state resources by elected officials with regard to ballot propositions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Horn, Jacobsen and Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/14/03, 3/4/03 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

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**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** The general rule of the ethics code that applies to state employees and state elected officials does not allow the use of state facilities for assisting a campaign or for promoting or opposing a ballot proposition.

Some activities are excepted, including de minimis use of state facilities by statewide elected officials and legislators to initiate communication of their views on ballot propositions that may affect a matter that falls within the responsibilities of their offices.

**Summary of Bill:** Statewide elected officials may use state facilities to initiate, or respond with, written and verbal communications on ballot propositions that may affect a matter that falls within the responsibilities of their offices.

De minimis use of state facilities for permissible communications is still allowed as well.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The inability of legislators to speak out on R-51, a legislative package that we put before the voters, was very frustrating. It puts legislators in an awkward position. We need to untie our hands and act like elected officials; we have a responsibility to be spokesmen.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Haugen, prime sponsor.