
**State Government Operations &
Accountability Committee**

SHB 1226

Brief Description: Adjusting application of campaign contribution limits.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government Operations & Accountability (originally sponsored by Representatives Schual-Berke, Tom, Haigh, Cody, Fromhold, Jarrett, Hudgins, Conway, Appleton, Flannigan, Murray, McCoy, Lantz, Hasegawa, Williams, Kagi, Ormsby, Morrell, Chase, Dickerson, Kenney and Sells).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends campaign contribution limits to county offices in a county that has over 200,000 registered voters; special purpose districts authorized to provide freight and passenger transfer and terminal facilities in a county that has over 200,000 registered voters; and to the Washington Supreme Court, Superior Court, and Appeals Court judges.

Hearing Date: 1/10/06

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134 in 1992. The initiative imposed campaign contribution limits, further regulated independent expenditures, restricted the use of public funds for political purposes, and required public officials to report gifts received in excess of \$50. The contribution limits imposed by Initiative 134 apply only to elections for statewide office and state legislative office.

Contribution limits imposed on an individual, a union or business, or a political action committee are an aggregate of \$675 per election to a candidate for state legislative office, and an aggregate of \$1,350 per election to a candidate for statewide office.

Limits also apply to political parties. State party central committees, minor party committees, and legislative caucus committees may contribute an aggregate of up to \$0.68 per registered voter in the candidate's district for an election cycle. County central committees and legislative district committees may contribute an aggregate of up to \$0.34 per registered voter in the candidate's district. Contributions received from county central committees and legislative district committees combined may not exceed an amount more than \$0.34 times the number of registered voters statewide to any one candidate.

These limits are adjusted for inflation by the Public Disclosure Commission every two years.

Summary of Bill:

Campaign contribution limits are extended to apply to:

1. candidates for county office in a county that have over 200,000 registered voters;
2. candidates for a special purpose district office if that district is authorized to provide freight and passenger transfer and terminal facilities and that district has over 200,000 registered voters; and
3. candidates for Superior Court, the Washington Supreme Court, and Court of Appeals judges.

Contribution limits imposed for applicable county offices, special purpose district offices, and Superior Court judges may not exceed an aggregate of \$675 per election and for offices for the Washington Supreme Court and Court of Appeals an aggregate of \$1,350 per election from an individual, a union or business, or a Political Action Committee. Political party contribution limits also apply.

Changes were made to update the monetary limits for inflation, as provided for in RCW 42.17.690.

Contributions to candidates for whom the new limits apply that are received before the effective date of the act are considered to be contributions for the purposes of campaign contribution limits statutes. Contributions that exceed the limitations and have not been spent by the recipient by the effective date of this Act must be disposed of in accordance with RCW 42.17.095, disposal of surplus funds, except that it may not be held by the candidate for a future election or be used for non-reimbursed public office-related expenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.