

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2419

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to hosting a national conference of statewide elected officials.

Brief Description: Raising funds for hosting a national conference of statewide elected officials.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Nixon, Clibborn and McDermott; by request of Lieutenant Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 1/13/06, 1/25/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits the Lieutenant Governor and his or her staff to solicit and accept funds for hosting the 2006 National Lieutenant Governors' Association conference.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia, Schindler and Sump.

Staff: Kasa Tupua (786-7291).

Background:

State ethics laws prohibit state officers and state employees from accepting gifts with an aggregate value of \$50 or more during any calendar year from any single source. Gifts may not be accepted under circumstances where the gifts would be considered as part of a reward for action or inaction, or could be reasonably expected to influence the state officers and employees' actions or official judgment.

For the purposes of hosting a national legislative association conference in Washington, legislative officers and employees may solicit and accept gifts, grants, or donations without regard of the \$50 limitation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

State ethics laws are changed to allow the Lieutenant Governor and his or her staff to solicit and accept gifts, grants, or donations beyond the \$50 limitation for purposes of hosting the 2006 official conference of the National Lieutenant Governors' Association.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The official conference of the National Lieutenant Governors' Association is specified as the event for authorizing the solicitation of funds. Only the Lieutenant Governor and his or her staff are authorized to solicit funds only for the purposes of hosting this event. The National Lieutenant Governors' Association must include among its membership Washington's Lieutenant Governor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (In support) The Lieutenant Governor has agreed to host the National Lieutenant Governors' Association's annual conference, and this bill allows legislative and executive officials and staff to raise funds for this purpose.

(With concerns) Various provisions in the Ethics in Public Service Act (Act) are impacted by this bill. The language may not be consistent with the legislative intent; gifts may be reasonably expected to influence the decision maker; terms, such as "official conference" are not defined, so the bill allows state elected officials and legislators and their staff to solicit for any official conference. The bill also does not require that solicitation be made on behalf of the organization or association; and other statutes in the Act such as activities incompatible with public duties, special privileges, and use of persons, money, or property for private gain may be violated.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Nixon; and Brian Hatfield and Antonio Sanchez, Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

(With concerns) Susan Harris, Executive Ethics Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.