

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1131

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 30, 2005

Title: An act relating to restrictions on mailing by legislators.

Brief Description: Regulating mail to constituents.

Sponsors: Representatives Nixon, Haigh and Shabro.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/05, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/28/05, 3/30/05 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Kline, McCaslin, Mulliken and Pridemore.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: With certain specific exceptions, state law prohibits either regular or electronic mailings to constituents by a legislator during the twelve months that precede the end of the November of a general election in which the legislator is running for office. Violating this prohibition constitutes use of public facilities for campaign purposes.

Summary of Bill: The existing twelve-month prohibition on legislative mailings continues to apply to those sent by regular mail. For electronic mail, however, the period of the prohibition begins forty-five days after the regular legislative session and concludes at the end of the November of the general election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Constituents expect to get news from their legislators, but under the existing prohibition, they can't hear from their representative for half of a term. These would not be mass, unsolicited communications, but would be sent to subscribers to various e-mail lists.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Nixon, prime sponsor.