

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2210

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to extending contribution limits to school board candidates.

Brief Description: Extending contribution limits to school board candidates.

Sponsors: Representatives Billig, Carlyle, Lytton, Dahlquist, Asay, Fitzgibbon, Appleton, Warnick, Klippert, Hurst, Stanford, Kelley, Goodman, Ryu, Hudgins, Ormsby, Nealey, Hunt, Haigh, Hargrove, Finn, Tharinger, Santos, Moeller, Takko, Armstrong, McCoy, Jinkins, Probst, Van De Wege, Maxwell, Green, Sells, Reykdal, Ladenburg, Hasegawa, Pollet, Kenney and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/12/12, 1/16/12 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds school board offices to the list of public offices subject to campaign contribution limits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Darneille, Dunshee, Hurst, McCoy and Miloscia.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander and Condotta.

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

Background:

The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134 (I-134) in 1992. The initiative imposed campaign contribution limits, further regulated independent

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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 I-134 apply only to elections for statewide office and elections for state legislative office.

Contributions made by an individual, a union or business, or a political action committee are limited to an aggregate of \$800 per election to a candidate for state legislative office or county office and an aggregate of \$1,600 per election to a candidate for statewide office, port district office, and judicial office.

Campaign contribution limits are also imposed on political parties. State party central committees, minor party committees, and legislative caucus committees may contribute an aggregate of up to 80 cents 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 40 cents per registered voter in the candidate's district. County central committees and legislative district committees combined may not contribute to any one candidate an amount more than 40 cents times the number of registered voters statewide. These limits are adjusted for inflation by the Public Disclosure Commission every two years.

Summary of Bill:

School board offices are added to the list of public offices subject to campaign contribution limits. A contribution from an individual, union, business, or political action committee is limited to an aggregate of \$800 per election to a candidate for a school board office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) State laws limiting campaign contributions have been very effective at increasing the public's confidence in the election system and limiting the possibility of corruption. School board races should also be subject to campaign limits insofar as they are especially susceptible to the undue influence of big donors. In small races, a single donor can disproportionately impact the result of an election. Campaign contributions are especially out of control in the school board elections in Seattle. This bill enhances the transparency of government activities and discourages corruption.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Billig, prime sponsor; Representative Carlyle; and Steve Zemke, King County Democrats.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.