

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2499

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 21, 2012

Title: An act relating to expanding disclosure of political advertising to include advertising supporting or opposing ballot measures.

Brief Description: Expanding disclosure of political advertising to include advertising supporting or opposing ballot measures.

Sponsors: Representatives Billig, Finn, Hunt, Appleton, Hasegawa, Reykdal, Lias, Ormsby, Sells, Jinkins, Fitzgibbon, Kagi, Miloscia, Kelley, Hudgins, Roberts and Pollet.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/12, 75-22.

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/21/12 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Chase and Nelson.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Swecker, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: All written political advertising must include the sponsor's name and address. Political advertising that is broadcast must include the sponsor's name. Political advertising undertaken as an independent expenditure by a person or entity other than a party organization and all electioneering communications must include a statement indicating that the advertisement is not authorized by any candidate, as well as information about who paid for the advertisement. If an advertisement is an independent expenditure or electioneering communication sponsored by a political committee, the top five contributions must be listed. If the sponsor of the advertisement is a political committee established, maintained, or controlled directly, or indirectly through the formation of one or more political committees, by an individual, corporation, union, association, or other entity, the full name of that individual or entity must also be listed in the advertisement.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Independent expenditures pertain to advertisements made in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate. Electioneering communications are advertisements that clearly identify a candidate by either specifically naming the candidate, or identifying the candidate without using the candidate's name.

A political committee means any person, except a candidate or an individual dealing with personal funds or property, having the expectation of receiving contributions or making expenditures in support of, or opposition to, any candidate or any ballot proposition.

Summary of Bill: Political advertising costing \$1,000 or more that supports or opposes a ballot measure, and is sponsored by a political committee, must include a listing of the names of the five persons or entities making the largest contributions in excess of \$700 during the 12-month period before the date of the advertisement.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently, there are limits to disclose the top five contributors on independent expenditures and electioneering communications, and this requirement should be extended to political advertising on ballot measures. This bill creates transparency for ballot measures.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Breaux, Service Employees International Union 775.