

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5021

C 145 L 11
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Enhancing election campaign disclosure requirements to promote greater transparency for the public.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Pridemore, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Prentice, Tom, Chase, White, Nelson, Haugen and McAuliffe).

Senate Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs
House Committee on General Government Appropriations & Oversight

Background: Initiative 276, passed by the voters in 1972, established disclosure of campaign finances, lobbyist activities, financial affairs of elective offices and candidates, and access to public records. It also created the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), a five-member, bi-partisan citizen commission, to enforce the provisions of the campaign finance disclosure law.

In 1992 the Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134. Initiative 134 imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for statewide and legislative office, 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.

Provisions for reporting political advertising and electioneering communications were enacted by the Legislature in 2005 and amended in 2010.

Summary: Reporting Requirements. The definition of "electioneering communication" is amended to reflect a lower reporting threshold of the fair market value of \$1,000.

The threshold amount triggering mandatory electronic filing for candidates and political committees is lowered to \$5,000.

Political Committees. *Naming Requirements.*

- A political committee name must include the name of the person or entity that is a sponsor of the committee.
- No two political committees may have the same name.

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.

Criminal and Civil Penalties.

- A person who with actual malice violates a provision of RCW 42.17 is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- A person who, within a five-year period, with actual malice violates three or more provisions of RCW 42.17 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.
- A person who with actual malice procures or offers any false or forged document to be filed, registered, or recorded with the PDC is guilty of a class C felony.

Political committees may make a contribution to another political committee only when the contributing political committee has received contributions of \$10 or more from at least ten persons registered to vote in Washington State.

The name of the sponsor of a political committee must be in the name of the political committee. If more than one person is the sponsor, the name of the committee must include the name of at least one sponsor but may include the name of additional sponsors.

A person may only sponsor one political committee for the same elected office or same ballot measure per election cycle.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: January 1, 2012.