
Government Operations & Elections Committee

HB 1720

Brief Description: Increasing transparency of donors to candidates and ballot measures.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Ryu, Jinkins, Fitzgibbon, Roberts, Pollet, Fey, Moscoso and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that a statement be printed on each ballot and voters' pamphlet, informing voters that a list of campaign donors is available on the Public Disclosure Commission website.

Hearing Date: 2/20/13

Staff: Jasmine Vasavada (786-7301).

Background:

Whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, the Secretary of State must print a voters' pamphlet and distribute it to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations. The voters' pamphlet contains the following information:

- information about ballot measures and advisory vote measures;
- candidate statements, if submitted;
- contact information for the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC);
- contact information for the major political parties;
- a statement explaining the amendatory style used in ballot measures; and
- any additional information required by law, or that the Secretary of State deems informative to voters.

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.

County auditors may use one of two types of ballots, either a consolidated ballot or a physically separate ballot. A consolidated ballot is a single ballot on which voters may pick a party preference (Democratic, Republican, or Libertarian) and all of the partisan races are presented in individual sections for each party. Nonpartisan races and ballot measures are listed after all of the partisan races. Physically separate ballots consist of a separate ballot for each party (Democratic, Republican, or Libertarian) that contains all partisan races as well as all of the nonpartisan races and issues. Regardless of the type of ballot used, the top of each ballot must contain clear and concise instructions directing the voter on how to mark their ballot, including how to write in a vote. Ballots must contain a clear delineation between the instructions and the candidates and measures that appear on the ballot.

Summary of Bill:

The following statement must be printed on ballot instructions and in the voters' pamphlet: "For a list of the people and organizations that donated to state and local government candidates and ballot measure campaigns, visit www.pdc.wa.gov."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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