

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6371

As of January 28, 2014

Title: An act relating to removing the requirement that candidates and authorized political committees must file contribution and expenditure reports electronically.

Brief Description: Removing the requirement that candidates and authorized political committees must file contribution and expenditure reports electronically.

Sponsors: Senator Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/28/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created by Initiative 276 in 1972, and is empowered to provide timely public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates; and to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.

Candidates for elective office and their authorized political committees must file reports with the PDC detailing expenditures made and contributions of more than \$25 received. These reports must be filed at the following intervals:

- on the tenth day of the month if the candidate received a contribution or made an expenditure in the preceding calendar month and either the total contributions received or total expenditures made since the last report exceed \$200;
- 21 days before the election;
- seven days before the election; and
- on the tenth day of the month following the election.

Each candidate or political committee that expended \$5,000 or more in the previous calendar year or expects to expend \$5,000 or more in the current year must file their contribution and expenditure reports through an electronic system created by the PDC. The PDC may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis for candidates required to file electronically when their authorized committees lack the technological ability to file reports electronically.

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.

Summary of Bill: Candidates and their authorized committees are no longer required to file contribution and expenditure reports with the PDC electronically.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: The purpose of this bill is to get some clarity. The issue is scanning the paper reports. On the PDC website, even professionals cannot find the paper filings candidates make. These show that candidates are viable and raising money.

OTHER: The PDC has taken no formal position on the bill, but believes the bill takes a significant step backward in terms of transparency. The PDC receives around 75,000 reports annually, and if we receive more of those electronically, we believe people are better off. It is uncertain how many candidates would use this option. Electronically filed reports allow data to immediately be entered into the database and make it searchable by the public. Paper reports must be manually entered.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Roach, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Andrea Doyle, PDC.