S-1004.1

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**SENATE BILL 5661**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Roach, Liias, Mullet, Keiser, and Benton

AN ACT Relating to the legislature holding a public hearing on a ballot proposition; and amending RCW 42.52.180.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 42.52.180 and 2011 c 60 s 30 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the use of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. The legislature may hold public hearings on ballot propositions. Knowing acquiescence by a person with authority to direct, control, or influence the actions of the state officer or state employee using public resources in violation of this section constitutes a violation of this section. Facilities of an agency include, but are not limited to, use of stationery, postage, machines, and equipment, use of state employees of the agency during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the agency, and clientele lists of persons served by the agency.

(2) This section shall not apply to the following activities:

(a) Action taken at an open public meeting by members of an elected legislative body to express a collective decision, or to actually vote upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance, or to support or oppose a ballot proposition as long as (i) required notice of the meeting includes the title and number of the ballot proposition, and (ii) members of the legislative body or members of the public are afforded an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view;

(b) A statement by an elected official in support of or in opposition to any ballot proposition at an open press conference or in response to a specific inquiry. For the purposes of this subsection, it is not a violation of this section for an elected official to respond to an inquiry regarding a ballot proposition, to make incidental remarks concerning a ballot proposition in an official communication, or otherwise comment on a ballot proposition without an actual, measurable expenditure of public funds. The ethics boards shall adopt by rule a definition of measurable expenditure;

(c) The maintenance of official legislative web sites throughout the year, regardless of pending elections. The web sites may contain any discretionary material which was also specifically prepared for the legislator in the course of his or her duties as a legislator, including newsletters and press releases. The official legislative web sites of legislators seeking reelection shall not be altered between June 30th and November 15th of the election year. The web site shall not be used for campaign purposes;

(d) Activities that are part of the normal and regular conduct of the office or agency; and

(e) De minimis use of public facilities by statewide elected officials and legislators incidental to the preparation or delivery of permissible communications, including written and verbal communications initiated by them of their views on ballot propositions that foreseeably may affect a matter that falls within their constitutional or statutory responsibilities.

(3) As to state officers and employees, this section operates to the exclusion of RCW 42.17A.555.

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