State Government Committee

HB 2437

Brief Description: Concerning election year restrictions on state legislators.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, S. Hunt and Appleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reduces the period a state legislator is restricted from mailing constituents during an election year to the day after the election.

Hearing Date: 1/19/16

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

With some exceptions, state officers and employees are prohibited from using state agency facilities and resources to assist with any election campaign. State legislators are specifically restricted from sending constituents any letter, newsletter, brochure, or other literature provided at public expense by mail or electronic mail. The restriction applies during the period starting December 1 of the year before the legislator's general election through November 30 after the election.

During the restricted period, the legislator may mail two general newsletters to constituents. One newsletter may be sent within 30 days of the start of the regular legislative session, and the other may be sent up to 60 days after the end of the regular session. Legislators also may send mail and electronic mail to individual constituents who request information. Violations of the communication restrictions constitute a violation of the state ethics law, subject to enforcement by the Legislative Ethics Board.

Summary of Bill:

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.

The period during which a state legislator is restricted from sending mail to a constituent is shortened to end on the day after the election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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