
State Government Committee

ESSB 5785

Brief Description: Revising the definition of official duties of state officers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Security (originally sponsored by Senators Rivers, Nelson, Dansel, Hatfield, Pearson, Fain, Liias and Hobbs).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes the definition in the Ethics in Public Employment Act of official duties related to a state elected officer.

Hearing Date: 3/24/15

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The Legislature enacted the state Ethics in Public Employment Act (Ethics Act) in 1994. The Ethics Act is governed by three bodies: the executive ethics board, the legislative ethics board, and the commission on judicial conduct, that have authority over the state officers and employees within each respective governmental branch.

The Ethics Act generally prohibits state officers and employees from having a financial or other interest, such as engaging in a business, transaction, professional activity, or incurring an obligation that conflicts with the official duties of the officer or employee. The Ethics Act also limits the kind of gifts state officers and employees may receive, and prohibits the use of public resources for private gain of the officer or employee.

The Ethics Act defines a state officer or employee's official duties as those within the specific scope of employment as defined the officer or employee's agency, by statute, or the state Constitution. A state employee is anyone employed by an agency in any branch of government, except the superior courts. A state officer means any person holding a position of public trust in an office in any branch of government including: judges; legislators; executive branch elected

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officers; chief executive officers; members of boards; and commissions with certain governmental authority.

Summary of Bill:

The definition of official duties for state elected officers is changed in the Ethics Act to mean the duties prescribed in the state Constitution or statute, agency rules, authority or responsibility funded or mandated by the Legislature, and tasks or actions directly related to the officer's other official duties.

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.