

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6161

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to establishing a training course for campaign treasurers.

Brief Description: Establishing a training course for campaign treasurers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Becker, Hunt, Fain, Rivers, Kuderer, Saldaña, Zeiger, Bailey, Carlyle, Conway, Wilson, Rolfes, Wellman, Hasegawa, Honeyford, Darneille, Angel, Lias, Walsh, O'Ban, Sheldon, Palumbo, Fortunato, Hobbs, Short, Mullet, Van De Wege and Wagoner).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 2/21/18, 2/23/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) to provide a training course for certifying political campaign treasurers and deputy treasurers beginning September 1, 2018.
- Requires political campaign treasurers and deputy treasurers to be trained and certified by the PDC beginning May 1, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; McDonald, Ranking Minority Member; Kraft, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Johnson and Pellicciotti.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Washington's campaign finance and disclosure law was originally enacted by voter initiative in 1972. The law requires the disclosure of campaign finance and lobbyist activity, as well as

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the financial affairs of elective officers and candidates. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) enforces the provisions of the campaign finance disclosure law and has authority to develop procedures, adopt rules, investigate complaints, and impose civil penalties for violations.

The campaign finance and disclosure law requires all political committees and candidates to designate a treasurer for the candidate or committee. Candidates must designate and file with the PDC the name of a treasurer, who may be the candidate him or herself, within two weeks of becoming a candidate. Political committees must designate and file the name of a treasurer at the time of filing a statement of organization with the PDC. Candidates and political committees, or their treasurers, may appoint deputy treasurers as well and file their names with the PDC.

Treasurers are responsible for depositing all contributions received by a candidate or political committee in a designated account. Treasurers must keep books of account that are current within five business days of all contribution and expenditure activities. Books of account must be made available for inspection by appointment at a designated location, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., on any weekday from the tenth day before an election through the day immediately after the election.

Candidate and committee treasurers are responsible for filing periodic and special reports with the PDC and maintaining accounting records. Reporting requirements include filing an initial report and subsequent reports due 21 days and seven days before an election, one month after the election, and each month the committee receives or spends at least \$200. Political committee and candidate treasurers also must submit a special report each time it receives a contribution of \$1,000 or more during the period immediately preceding an election.

Summary of Bill:

By September 1, 2018, the PDC must provide a training course for individuals acting as candidate and political committee treasurers and deputy treasurers. The training must be available in person and remotely, and provide a comprehensive overview of:

- the responsibilities of the treasurer and deputy treasurer;
- the reporting requirements, including triggers and deadlines;
- candidate contribution limits and restrictions;
- the PDC's electronic filing system; and
- any other subjects the PDC deems necessary for encouraging compliance.

The PDC must provide a five-year certification for individuals who complete the course.

By May 1, 2019, candidate and committee treasurers must be trained and certified by the PDC in order to be deemed in compliance with the campaign finance and disclosure law. The training and certification requirement does not apply to candidates who serve as their own treasurers, volunteer treasurers or deputies, or treasurers and deputies that work for

candidates or committees that do not expect to receive or spend over \$5,000 in contributions or expenditures.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The current training provided by the PDC is very useful to campaign candidates and staff. This service should be increased to ensure that treasurers and campaigns comply with the campaign finance and disclosure laws. This certification process will provide assurances for candidates that the treasurers they hire are competent to meet all the filing requirements for the campaign.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Becker, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.