

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6161

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 26, 2018

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

Brief Description: Establishing a training course for campaign treasurers.

Sponsors: 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, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/24/18, 1/26/18 [DPS-WM].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires that the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) develop a training course for campaign treasurers and deputy treasurers.
- Prohibits any person from serving as a campaign treasurer or deputy treasurer for a campaign receiving contributions or making expenditures of more than \$5,000 without certification of successfully completing the training course in the past five years, beginning May 1, 2019.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6161 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Miloscia, Ranking Member; Saldaña and Zeiger.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The PDC. The PDC, created by the passage of Initiative 276 in 1972, is empowered to provide timely public access to information about the financing of political

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campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates, and to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.

Campaign Treasurers. Each candidate and political committee must file the name and address of the candidate or committee's campaign treasurer with the PDC. The campaign may name as many deputy treasurers as deemed necessary.

The treasurer must file contribution and expenditure reports with the PDC 21 and 7 days before the election, as well as on the tenth day of the first month after the election. The treasurer must file contribution and expenditure reports on the tenth of each month where the campaign receives a contribution or makes an expenditure and has received contributions or made expenditures of more than \$200 since the last report.

Treasurers must maintain books of account and are responsible for depositing all contributions received by the candidate or committee in the depository designated at the time of initial filing with the PDC.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): The PDC must provide a training course for campaign treasurers or deputy treasurers by December 1, 2018. The training course must cover:

- responsibilities of treasurers and deputy treasurers;
- reporting requirements, deadlines, and contribution limits and restrictions;
- how to use the electronic filing system;
- penalties for violation of campaign finance laws; and
- any other subjects the PDC considers necessary for compliance.

The training course must be provided in person and remotely. The PDC determines the requirements for completion of the course.

By May 1, 2019, no person, other than the candidate themselves, may serve as a campaign treasurer or deputy treasurer for a campaign receiving contributions or making expenditures of more than \$5,000 without certification of successful completion of the training course within the past five years.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (First Substitute): Treasurers or deputy treasurers for campaigns not expecting to receive contributions or make expenditures of \$5,000 or less are exempted from the requirement to complete training.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: We need to have this training so

candidates know when they're hiring someone, they can avoid unnecessary allegations of simple reporting errors. Current PDC training is very helpful. Many candidate treasurers are volunteers and others are out of step with updates in the laws. This will ensure public knowledge of how campaigns are funded. Hopefully the education provisions of this bill will reduce the level of technical violations so the PDC can focus its enforcement agenda on actual substantive violations.

CON: Reform needs to focus on simplifying campaign finance law so it's possible for volunteers to be able to comply. We don't need more barriers to entry for new candidates for office.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Randi Becker, Prime Sponsor; Mike Webb, Attorney General's Office; Arthur West, citizen.

CON: Glen Morgan, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.