

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5388

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

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 Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Becker, Bailey, Cleveland, Hunt, Short, O'Ban, King, Keiser, Walsh, Wilson, L., Darneille, Warnick, Honeyford, Brown, Billig, Hasegawa, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Kuderer).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 3/15/19, 3/22/19 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)

- Requires the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) to develop and provide a training course for treasurers and deputy treasurers for candidates or political committees, subject to the availability of amounts appropriated.
- Requires individuals, other than the candidate, to be deemed certified by completing the PDC's training course in order to serve as a treasurer or deputy treasurer, subject to exceptions.
- Prohibits a treasurer or deputy treasurer from being deemed in compliance with the campaign finance statute unless he or she holds a current certification from the PDC, subject to exceptions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins and Smith.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Mosbrucker.

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.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Commission.

Washington's campaign finance and disclosure law was originally enacted by voter initiative in 1972.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 the financial affairs of elective officers, candidates, and executive state officers. 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 PDC may provide access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates.

Public Disclosure Commission Training.

The PDC provides various optional training courses for candidates, political committees, lobbyists, and lobbyist employers. The courses include various topics, such as: training on compliance with campaign registration, filing disclosure reports, contribution limits and regulations, and political advertisement regulations.

Treasurers.

A treasurer or deputy treasurer is an individual appointed by a candidate or political committee to perform certain tasks related to the campaign. Each candidate and each political committee must designate and file with the PDC the name and address of the designated treasurer. A deputy treasurer may be appointed by the candidate, political committee, or a treasurer.

The treasurer has the responsibility to file certain reports with the PDC. For example, the treasurer must file a report, containing certain contribution and expenditure information, on the twenty-first day and the seventh day immediately preceding the election, and on the tenth day of the first month after an election. The treasurer must also file the report on the tenth day of each month in which no other reports are required to be filed, if there are contributions or expenditures since the last report that exceed \$200. The treasurer must certify the accuracy of the reports filed.

The treasurer is responsible for maintaining books of account and preserving bills, receipts, and all other financial records of the campaign or political committee for at least five years. The treasurer also deposits funds received from fund-raising activities in the depository and reports to the PDC on fund-raising activities. In addition, the candidate, a political committee member, paid staff, or the treasurer must deposit all contributions in an account, and the treasurer must report to the PDC on each bank deposit made during the previous seven days.

Summary of Amended Bill:

PDC Training.

By September 1, 2019, and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated, the PDC must develop and provide a training course for treasurers and deputy treasurers for candidates and political committees.

The course must provide an overview of:

- responsibilities of treasurers and deputy treasurers;
- reporting requirements necessary for candidate compliance with campaign finance laws;
- campaign contribution limits and restrictions;
- consequences for violations of the campaign finance laws; and
- other subjects or topics the PDC deems necessary to encourage the effective compliance with the campaign finance laws.

The PDC determines the requirements for course completion. Individuals who complete the course will be deemed certified by the PDC.

Certifications are in effect for five years from the date of issuance. The PDC must develop a system to track certification status, and must provide the course in person and also remotely via the Internet.

Treasurers.

Beginning May 1, 2020, only individuals, other than the candidate, who are deemed certified by the PDC may serve as a treasurer or deputy treasurer, unless:

- the candidate or political committee does not expect to receive contributions or make expenditures of more than \$5,000;
- the treasurer or deputy treasurer will not receive more than nominal compensation for serving as treasurer or deputy treasurer; or
- the treasurer or deputy treasurer is an actively licensed certified public accountant (CPA) with the Washington State Board of Accountancy.

After May 1, 2020, no treasurer or deputy treasurer, other than a candidate, may be deemed to be in compliance with the campaign finance laws until he or she is trained and currently certified by the PDC, unless:

- the candidate or political committee does not expect to receive contributions or make expenditures of more than \$5,000;
- the treasurer or deputy treasurer will not receive more than nominal compensation for serving as treasurer or deputy treasurer; or
- the treasurer or deputy treasurer is an actively licensed certified public accountant with the Washington State Board of Accountancy.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

Provisions in the bill are aligned to allow, as an alternative to being certified by the PDC, a person to serve as a treasurer or deputy treasurer if any of the following criteria are met:

- the candidate or political committee does not expect to receive contributions or make expenditures of more than \$5,000;
 - the treasurer or deputy treasurer will not receive more than nominal compensation for serving as treasurer or deputy treasurer; or
 - the treasurer or deputy treasurer is an actively licensed CPA with the Washington State Board of Accountancy.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.