

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5857

As Amended by House, February 27, 2024

Title: An act relating to reorganizing statutes on campaign disclosure and contribution.

Brief Description: Reorganizing statutes on campaign disclosure and contribution.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Hunt and Nobles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/19/24, 1/26/24 [DPS].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/9/24, 49-0.

Passed House: 2/27/24, 95-0.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Recodifies and reorganizes provisions related to campaign disclosure and contribution.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5857 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier, Fortunato, Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Staff: Greg Vogel (786-7413)

Background: In 1972 Washington's voters approved the state's campaign finance disclosure law, also known as the Fair Campaign Practices Act (Act), to promote disclosure of information regarding the financing of political campaigns and lobbying. These laws govern the state's campaign finance requirements by, among other things, requiring

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campaign finance reporting and setting contribution limits.

Through the Act, state voters approved creation of the state's Public Disclosure Commission (Commission). The Commission is charged with providing public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates. The Commission works to ensure compliance with and enforcement of Washington's disclosure and campaign finance laws.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: Provisions on campaign disclosure and contribution are recodified and reorganized under a new title, 29B.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2026.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The Legislature is the steward of the Washington code and therefore, it's appropriate from time to time to improve the code to make sure as the law evolves, it remains flexible and accessible for change. This reorganization would benefit both the understanding and administration of the law. The bill is intended to be technical, and we are not seeking any substantive changes with the law.

CON: If this change were to go through, it would make it more difficult for campaign treasurers to understand what statutes are being referenced in documents.

OTHER: There is not a particularly compelling reason to reorganize these statutes and there is potential for short term confusion. There are higher priorities to consider for campaign finance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sam Hunt, Prime Sponsor; Sean Flynn, Public Disclosure Commission; Sam Martin, People Powered Elections Washington.

CON: Conner Edwards, WA Professional Campaign Treasurer.

OTHER: Joe Kunzler.

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

EFFECT OF HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

- Corrects an internal reference relating to a campaign's responsibility to maintain records of a candidate's lost earnings as a result of that candidate's election campaign.