

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 2016

PARTIAL VETO C 204 L 10 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning campaign contribution and disclosure laws.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Flannigan, Appleton, Hurst, Miloscia and Hunt).

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs
Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections

Background:

Reorganization.

Initiative 276, passed by the voters in 1972, established disclosure of campaign finances, lobbyist activities, financial affairs of elective officers and candidates, and access to public records. That initiative also created the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), a five-member, bipartisan citizen commission, to enforce the provisions of the campaign finance disclosure law.

Twenty years later, in 1992, the Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134. Initiative 134 imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for statewide and legislative office, further regulated independent expenditures, restricted the use of public funds for political purposes, and required public officials to report gifts received in excess of \$50.

Since the enactment of these initiatives numerous changes and additions have been made, including the enactment of Substitute House Bill 1133 in 2005 resulting in a recodification of the public records portion of the Public Disclosure Act into chapter 42.56 RCW.

Political Advertising.

Provisions for reporting political advertising and electioneering communications were enacted in 2005. Political advertising undertaken as an independent expenditure by a person or entity other than a party organization, and all electioneering communications must include a statement indicating that the ad is not authorized by any candidate, as well as information on who paid for the ad. If an ad is an independent expenditure or electioneering communication sponsored by a political committee, the top five contributors must be listed.

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.

Contribution Limits.

The dollar amount that a person may give to a candidate is governed by law. These dollar amounts are adjusted for inflation every two years by the PDC. A political party has different limits than a person. Certain contributions are exempt from any limits, including contributions for the purpose of voter registration, get-out-the vote campaigns, or expenditures by a political committee for its own internal organization or fundraising without direct association with individual candidates. Any expenditure or contribution for independent expenditure or electioneering communication made by a political party for a candidate is considered to be a contribution to that candidate.

Summary:

Reorganization.

Chapter 42.17 RCW is reorganized. Obsolete provisions relating to the information technology plan and electronic filing are removed. The provisions in repealed statutes are included in other statutes. The contribution dollar amounts are updated and technical changes are made to clarify language.

Definitions.

The definition for "bona fide political party" is changed as it relates to minor parties. A minor political party is an organization that has been recognized as such by the Secretary of State. In addition to a bank, a "depository" means a mutual savings bank, savings and loan association, or credit union doing business in this state. The definition for "person in interest" is moved from chapter 42.17 RCW to chapter 42.56 RCW as the term is applicable to the public records statutes. The definition for "writing" is removed.

Political Advertising.

Requirements pertaining to independent expenditures and electioneering communications that require listing of the top five contributors are modified. If the sponsor of a communication is a political committee established, maintained, or controlled directly or indirectly through the formation of one or more political committees by an individual, corporation, union, association, or other entity, the full name of that individual or entity must be listed.

Contribution Limits.

An expenditure or contribution for independent expenditures or electioneering communications are exempt from contribution limits.

Public Service Announcements.

State and municipal elected officials are prohibited from making public service announcements beginning January 1 of a reelection year through the general election, or until the official is no longer a candidate. If the elected official does not control the broadcast, showing, or distribution of the announcement, he or she must contractually limit the use of the public service announcement. The restrictions do not apply to public service announcements that are part of the regular duties of the officer that only mention or visually display the office or office seal or logo, and do not mention or visually display the name of the elected official in the announcement.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	63	35	
Senate	32	16	(Senate amended)
House	58	37	(House concurred)

Effective: March 25, 2010 (Sections 505, 602, and 703)
January 1, 2012

Partial Veto Summary: Sections 309, relating to preserving campaign finance statements and reports, 412, relating to special reports of independent expenditures, and 415 relating to independent expenditure disclosure with county election officials are vetoed as these same sections of law were amended or repealed in SB 6243.