

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1170

As Reported By House Committee On:

Local Government

Title: An act relating to ethics standards for elected municipal officers.

Brief Description: Making elected municipal officers subject to the same ethics standards as state officers with regard to gifts.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Bush, Scott, Benson, Gombosky, Mulliken, Mielke, Boldt, Schoesler, Esser and Lambert.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/1/99, 2/22/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes elected municipal officers subject to the same ethics standards with regard to receiving gifts as state officials and employees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen; Fisher and Fortunato.

Staff: Scott MacColl (786-7106).

Background:

Local government officials are prohibited from accepting gifts for a matter connected with or related to the official's services. However, there is no restriction, monetary or otherwise, on gifts unrelated to the official's services, monetary or otherwise.

Different ethics standards apply to state officials and employees regarding gifts. State officials and employees may not receive any gift in excess of \$50 from one source or a

single gift from multiple sources in any calendar year. Specific exceptions include unsolicited:

- flowers;
- advertising material or promotional items of nominal value;
- tokens or awards of appreciation;
- informational material, publications or subscriptions related to official duties;
- food and beverages consumed at hosted receptions where attendance is related to official duties;
- admission to and the cost of food and beverages consumed at a charitable, governmental or community organization; and
- gifts from dignitaries of a personal nature.

Gifts in the form of food and beverage that exceed \$50 dollars on any one occasion must be reported as provided in chapter 42.17 RCW, the public disclosure laws.

Summary of Bill:

A new section is added to the municipal code of ethics (chapter 42.23 RCW) to subject local officials in elected positions to the same requirements as state officials and employees regarding gifts. Local appointed officials not in elected offices are not subject to these requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony: (In support) This bill brings local governments into compliance with state ethics laws.

(In support with concerns) The bill needs to include staff of local governments as well as elected officials. The state ethics laws need to be clarified.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Campbell, prime sponsor;

(In support with concerns) Pat Jones, Washington Public Ports Association.