

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2673

As Passed House:

February 14, 2000

Title: An act relating to restrictions on mailing by legislators.

Brief Description: Regulating mail to constituents.

Sponsors: By House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Lambert, Ruderman, Cox, McIntire, Carrell, Edwards, Sump, Miloscia, Woods, Romero, Bush, Stensen, Esser, Keiser, Rockefeller, Morris, Koster, Edmonds, Ericksen, Lantz, Mulliken, Campbell and O'Brien).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/26/00, 2/4/00 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/00, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the prohibition regarding legislative mailings by electronic mail except for the period between the 45th day after session in an election year until November 30th.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Campbell, Republican Vice Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunshee; Haigh; Lambert and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

For the 12-month period preceding a general election in which a legislator is running for office, the legislator may not send to a constituent, either by regular mail or electronic mail, a letter, newsletter, brochure, or other piece of literature except:

- the legislator may send two newsletters during the 12-month period; and
- the legislator may respond to constituent inquiries.

Summary of Bill:

The prohibition regarding legislative mailings via electronic mail only applies from 45 days after a regular session in the year a legislator is running for office until November 30th of that year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Legislators should be able to keep their constituents informed during both years in a biennium. A better informed constituency can help decrease distrust in government. Because of the low cost of electronic mail, this bill does not give incumbents an advantage over challengers. Electronic mail updates make citizen advocacy easier.

Testimony Against: Electronic mail is not free. The compilation of electronic address lists, and the composition of newsletters uses staff time.

Testified: (In support) Representative Lambert and Representative Ruderman, co-sponsors; John Overbaugh; and David Carson.

(Opposed) Chuck Sauvage, Common Cause of Washington State.