

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5931

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring electronic filing and publication of campaign finance and lobbyist reports.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Patterson, Horn, Gardner, McCaslin, Haugen, Kline, Brown, Costa, Hale, Kohl-Welles, B. Sheldon and Bauer).

Senate Committee on State & Local Government

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on State Government

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created and empowered by initiative of the people to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates, and to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.

During the 1997-1999 biennium, the PDC received enhanced appropriations to enable the agency to offer more efficient services, fulfill responsibilities, and improve customer service technology. Some of these appropriations were specified for the following:

- one-time funding was provided to implement electronic filing of financial affairs statements; and
- one-time funding was provided for customer service technology improvements, including enhanced Internet access, fax-on-demand technology, personal computers, and software compatible with the agency's new imaging system.

Summary: The Legislature intends to ensure that the Public Disclosure Commission provide the general public timely access to all contribution and expenditure reports and to ensure that beginning January 1, 2001, the PDC establishes goals so that electronically submitted reports are accessible via the PDC's Internet web site within two business days of receipt of report and all other submitted reports are accessible via the PDC's web site within four business days (temporary goals until January 1, 2001, are specified).

By July 1 of each year beginning in 2000, the PDC must calculate and make available to the Governor, appropriate legislative committees, and the public the following performance measures:

- average number of days between the PDC's receipt of the following reports and the time that the reports are first accessible to the general public via the PDC's office and via the PDC's web site: continuing political committees, candidate committees, and

independent expenditures; special reports of late- contributions; and lobbyists and employers of lobbyists; and

- the percentage of candidates, categorized as statewide, state legislative, or local; continuing political committees; and lobbyists and lobbyists' employers who have used specified electronic methods to file various candidate reports.

The PDC must develop an information technology plan consistent with the requirements of the Department of Information Services. The plan must include: a baseline assessment of the PDC's information technology and resources; a statement for achieving electronic access to the PDC's records and services for the next five years and how this statement conforms to the state strategic information technology plan; an implementation strategy to enhance electronic access to public records and information required to be filed with and disclosed by the PDC; and estimated schedules and funding required to implement identified projects. In preparing the information technology plan, the PDC must consult with affected state agencies, the Department of Information Services, and stakeholders in the PDC's work.

The PDC must submit the information technology plan to the Governor, House and Senate committees, and the Department of Information Services by February 1, 2000.

The PDC must prepare and submit to the Department of Information Services a biennial performance report that must include: an evaluation of the PDC's performance relating to information technology; an assessment of progress toward implementing the plan; an analysis of its performance measures; an analysis of citizen interaction with the PDC; and an inventory of the PDC's information services, equipment, and proprietary software.

Any documents provided to the PDC for use in conducting audits and investigations must be returned to the sender within one week of the PDC's completion of the audit or field investigation.

By January 1, 2000, the PDC must operate a web site or contract for the operation of a web site that allows access to specified reports and information filed with it (organized by political committees, continuing political committees, candidates' contributions and expenditures, independent expenditures, and late- contributions). Lobbyists, lobbyist late- contributions and employers of registered lobbyist reports are not required to be accessible on the PDC web site until February 1, 2001. The PDC must also attempt to make available via the web site other public records required by the Public Disclosure Act.

By July 1, 1999, the PDC must offer every candidate, political committee, and party organization the option of electronic filing, financial affairs reports, contribution reports, and expenditure reports. Reporting forms must be made available at no charge. By January 1, 2001, electronic filing must be offered to lobbyists and lobbyists' employers. The PDC must notify the filer of receipt of the electronically filed report.

Beginning January 1, 2001, each continuing political committee that expended more than \$10,000 must file all contribution and expenditure reports electronically.

Times are changed when the books of account must be available to the public.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee must complete a performance audit of the PDC by December 1, 2000.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	85	11	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House			(House recessed)
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 25, 1999