
Government Operations & Elections Committee

SSB 5507

Brief Description: Increasing transparency of donors to candidates and ballot measures.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Governmental Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Benton, Rolfes, Rivers, Hatfield, Harper, Ranker, Hasegawa, Frockt, Schlicher, Smith, Fraser, Sheldon, Roach, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Shin, Murray, McAuliffe, Kline and Conway).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires that a statement including the Public Disclosure Commission's website be included with each ballot and voters' pamphlet.
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Hearing Date: 3/19/13

Staff: Jasmine Vasavada (786-7301).

Background:

Whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, the Secretary of State must print a voters' pamphlet and distribute it to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations. The voters' pamphlet contains the following information:

- information about ballot measures and advisory vote measures;
- candidate statements, if submitted;
- contact information for the Public Disclosure Commission;
- contact information for the major political parties;
- a statement explaining the amendatory style used in ballot measures; and
- any additional information required by law or that the Secretary of State deems informative to voters.

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.

The top of each ballot must contain clear and concise instructions directing the voter on how to mark their ballot, including how to write in a vote. Ballots must contain a clear delineation between the instructions and the candidates and measures that appear on the ballot. Although the county auditor or local election official has the overall responsibility to conduct state and local elections within a county, the cost of printing and mailing ballots, envelopes, and instructions is shared proportionately by cities, towns, and districts who are holding elections. The state also assumed a prorated share of the costs of certain elections.

Summary of Bill:

The following statement must be printed on the top of each ballot: "For a list of the people and organizations that donated to state and local government candidates and ballot measure campaigns, visit www.pdc.wa.gov." The Secretary of State may substitute such language as is necessary for accuracy and clarity. If placement of the statement on the ballot itself would lengthen the ballot to the point that additional postage will be incurred, the statement may be printed in a prominent place on the ballot envelope or in the ballot materials.

The Secretary of State must include the same statement in the voters' pamphlet. The Secretary of State may substitute such language as is necessary for accuracy and clarity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.