
SENATE BILL 5108

State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session

By Senators Billig, Miloscia, Hunt, Palumbo, Lias, Fain, Saldaña, Pedersen, Carlyle, Keiser, Cleveland, Mullet, Conway, and Kuderer

Read first time 01/12/17. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to contributions from political committees to
2 other political committees; amending RCW 42.17A.442; and creating a
3 new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the public has
6 the right to know who is contributing to election campaigns in
7 Washington state and that campaign finance disclosure deters
8 corruption, increases public confidence in Washington state
9 elections, raises the level of debate, and strengthens our
10 representative democracy.

11 The legislature finds that campaign finance disclosure is
12 overwhelmingly supported by the citizens of Washington state as
13 evidenced by the two initiatives that largely established
14 Washington's current system. Both passed with more than seventy-two
15 percent of the popular vote, as well as winning margins in every
16 county in the state.

17 One of the cornerstones of Washington state's campaign finance
18 disclosure laws is the requirement that political advertisements
19 disclose the sponsor and the sponsor's top five donors. Many
20 political action committees have avoided this important transparency
21 requirement by funneling money from political action committee to

1 political action committee so the top five donors listed are
2 deceptive political action committee names rather than the real
3 donors. The legislature finds that this practice, sometimes called
4 "gray money" or "donor washing," undermines the intent of Washington
5 state's campaign finance laws and impairs the transparency required
6 for fair elections and a healthy democracy.

7 Therefore, the legislature intends to close this disclosure
8 loophole, increase transparency and accountability, raise the level
9 of discourse, deter corruption, and strengthen confidence in the
10 election process by prohibiting political committees from receiving
11 an overwhelming majority of its funds from one or a combination of
12 political committees.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 42.17A.442 and 2011 c 145 s 5 are each amended to
14 read as follows:

15 (1) A political committee may make a contribution to another
16 political committee only when the contributing political committee
17 has received contributions of ten dollars or more each from at least
18 ten persons registered to vote in Washington state.

19 (2) A political committee may not receive seventy percent or more
20 of its aggregate contributions from a single political committee,
21 directly, or through any combination of other political committees.

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