

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6132

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As Passed Senate, February 12, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to campaign financing.

**Brief Description:** Limiting the exemption from campaign financing disclosure requirements to political subdivisions under one thousand population.

**Sponsors:** Senator Fairley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 1/29/96, 1/31/96 [DPS, DNPS].  
Passed Senate, 2/12/96, 25-24.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6132 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Quigley, Roach and Schow.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Long and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

**Background:** Under current law, the campaign financing provisions do not apply to election campaigns for an office in a political subdivision which does not encompass a whole county and contains fewer than 5,000 registered voters. It is felt that too many election campaigns are exempted by the large cutoff number.

Current law is unclear regarding contributions to a candidate who has not designated the office for which he or she is campaigning.

**Summary of Bill:** The campaign financing provisions do not apply to election campaigns for an office in a political subdivision which does not encompass a whole county and contains fewer than 1,000 registered voters.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** In small communities, a small sum can influence election outcomes. People have the right to know who has influence over those who control tax money. Just

because the number of voters is small and PDC reporting is burdensome is not a reason for people to be kept uninformed as to who contributes to campaigns.

**Testimony Against:** Additional burdens may preclude attracting qualified candidates for low-paying local public office jobs. The duties are important even if the pay is low and this bill could be a disincentive to run for office. Some cities already have trouble attracting candidates.

**Testified:** Senator Fairley, prime sponsor (pro); Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities (con).