

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5272

As Passed Senate, March 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to the citizen members of the legislative ethics board.

Brief Description: Limiting political activities of citizen members of the legislative ethics board.

Sponsors: Senators Long, Spanel and Horn; by request of Legislative Ethics Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 2/13/97, 2/25/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/12/97, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Hale, Vice Chair; Anderson, Haugen, Horn and Patterson.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Since the creation of the Legislative Ethics Board in 1994, it has become evident that some aspects of the board's functioning could be improved. The citizen members of the board are subject to a complete restriction on lobbying including casual conversations with legislators.

In the disposition of matters which come before the board, information can be disclosed which is to the disadvantage of a legislator who is a respondent to a complaint. There are no limitations on a citizen member of the board running for office against such a respondent. This leaves a potential for the board member to use the unfavorable information, learned by virtue of his or her membership on the Legislative Ethics Board, to the disadvantage of the legislator who provided the information in good faith.

Summary of Bill: Citizen members of the Legislative Ethics Board may engage in lobbying activities which are exempt from statutory registration requirements.

Citizen members of the Legislative Ethics Board are prohibited from holding or campaigning for a legislative seat within two years of serving on the board if the citizen member opposes an incumbent who has been the respondent in a complaint before the board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill clarifies the definition of lobbying by tying it to the PDC definition. It is preventative of future inadvertent violations and addresses a circumstance that has obvious ethical implications.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.