

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2898

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, February 23, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to distribution of communications by state employees.

**Brief Description:** Regulating distribution of communications by state employees.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Government Operations & Accountability (originally sponsored by Representatives Hunt and Williams).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/14/06, 97-1.

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/22/06, 2/23/06 [DP, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Fairley, Kline and Pridemore.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Mulliken.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** In general, the Ethics in Public Service chapter prohibits a state officer or employee from using that position for his or her personal benefit or for the benefit of another. Prohibited activities include using persons, money, or property under the control of the officer or employee for the officer or employee's personal gain; soliciting or receiving gifts or favors that could reasonably be expected to influence the officer or employee's vote or judgement, or be considered as a reward for action or inaction; and using state facilities to assist a campaign or to support or oppose a ballot proposition. State facilities include use of state employees during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the agency, and clientele lists. The chapter also includes exceptions and limitations on these prohibitions.

**Summary of Bill:** State employees may distribute communications from an employee organization or charitable organization to other state employees without violating the Ethics in Public Service chapter so long as the communications do not support or oppose a ballot proposition or candidate for any public office.

An employee organization is defined as any organization, union, or association in which employees participate and that exists for the purpose of collective bargaining with employers or for the purpose of opposing collective bargaining or certification of a union.

Lobbying activity using public funds, except as already provided for by law, is not authorized.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Due to the Ethics Board's roadblock, it is difficult to get information to state employees.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Representative Sam Hunt, the sponsor.