

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1835

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to updating inflationary adjustments in campaign finance laws.

Brief Description: Updating inflationary amounts in campaign finance laws.

Sponsors: Representatives Dolan, Jinkins and Doglio; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 2/8/17, 2/15/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adjusts the monetary threshold for a reportable independent expenditure from \$800 to \$1,000.
- Adjusts the threshold amount for a contribution that must be made by written instrument from \$80 to \$100.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Koster, Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Kraft and Pellicciotti.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Washington's campaign finance and disclosure law was enacted by initiative in 1972. The law requires the disclosure of campaign finances, lobbyist activities, and financial affairs of elective officers and candidates. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has the authority to develop procedures, adopt rules, investigate complaints, and impose civil penalties for violations of the law.

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 law establishes certain monetary thresholds that trigger some of the reporting requirements. The PDC is authorized by rule to adjust the monetary reporting thresholds within every two-to-five years, based on the inflation index recommended by the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

The PDC also must adjust the contribution limits and certain monetary thresholds every even-numbered year, based on the OFM-recommended inflation index. The monetary adjustments are authorized by rule and apply to the monetary threshold reporting for an independent expenditure, contributions made to candidates, certain contributions that must be made by written instrument, and reporting by employers of lobbyists who contribute over certain amounts.

Summary of Bill:

The PDC rulemaking authority for biennially adjusting the monetary reporting thresholds is removed for the threshold amount for a reportable independent expenditure and the threshold amount of a contribution that must be made by written instrument. The threshold amount for a reportable independent expenditure is changed from \$800 to \$1,000. The threshold amount for a contribution that must be made by written instrument is changed from \$80 to \$100.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The inflation scales include the thresholds for independent expenditures and cash contributions. Setting out those thresholds in statute, rather than by inflation, will help to make reporting requirements easier for campaigns.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Dolan, prime sponsor; and Evelyn Lopez, Public Disclosure Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.