

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2647

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 23, 2018

Title: An act relating to applying campaign contribution limits to candidates for all special purpose districts authorized to provide freight and passenger transfer and terminal facilities.

Brief Description: Applying campaign contribution limits to candidates for all special purpose districts authorized to provide freight and passenger transfer and terminal facilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Govt, Elections & IT (originally sponsored by Representatives Wylie, Stonier, Hudgins, Tarleton, Macri, Vick, Cody, Clibborn, Harris, Gregerson, Appleton, Fitzgibbon and Doglio).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/08/18, 97-0.

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/21/18, 2/23/18 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Applies campaign contribution limits to all port district elections, regardless of district population.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Miloscia, Ranking Member; Saldaña and Zeiger.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Fair Campaign Practices Act, enacted following passage of Initiative 134 in 1992, limits campaign contributions, regulates independent expenditures, restricts the use of public funds for political purposes, and requires public officials to report gifts received in excess of \$50.

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.

State parties and caucus political parties may contribute up to \$1.00 per registered voter to a port commissioner candidate, while county central committees and legislative district committees combined may contribute up to \$0.50 per registered voter. Individuals, unions, businesses, and other political action committees may contribute up to \$2,000 per election to a port commissioner candidate. These limits are adjusted for inflation by the Public Disclosure Commission every two years.

Campaign contribution limits apply to candidates for port commissioner only if the port district has over 200,000 registered voters. The Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma are the two port districts in the state that have over 200,000 registered voters.

Summary of Amended Bill: Campaign contribution limits apply to all port district offices, regardless of the number of registered voters in the district.

EFFECT OF STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S): References to special purpose districts are replaced with references to port districts for consistency and clarity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This was a hot-button issue last fall; a business spent over \$500,000 to try to support a candidate in our community, shocking everyone who thought we were playing by the same rules. In a time where the public is paying more attention, it's important to make sure all our elections have integrity. These are downticket races. This has become a statewide problem. These large contributions aren't in the public interest.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sharon Wylie, Prime Sponsor; Eric Johnson, Washington Public Ports Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.