

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2376

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,
FEBRUARY 27, 1992**

Brief Description: Requiring a statement of responsibility to accompany political advertising.

SPONSORS: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Hine, Prince, Anderson, Miller, Pruitt, G. Fisher, Cooper, Jacobsen, Winsley, Brough, Jones, Heavey, Paris, Wineberry, Roland, G. Cole, J. Kohl, Ludwig, Mitchell, Bowman, Wynne, Spanel, Ogden, Haugen, Valle, McLean, Ferguson, Sprenkle and O'Brien)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

Staff: Barbara Howard (786-7410)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1992

BACKGROUND:

The state's public disclosure law requires a written political ad to include the name and address of the sponsor and requires a radio or television ad to include the sponsor's name. An ad for a candidate for partisan office must identify the candidate's party. Certain forms of advertising are exempt from these requirements. The Public Disclosure Commission has the authority to provide further exemptions by rule in cases for which the identification is impractical.

A person may not, with actual malice, sponsor political advertising that contains a false statement of material fact, that falsely represents a candidate as being the incumbent for an office, or that makes a false claim stating or implying the support or endorsement of any person or organization. In general, the sponsor of the advertising is responsible for complying with these requirements.

SUMMARY:

Written political advertising must include the following statement, signed by the responsible party: "I fully accept responsibility for the accuracy of this message." A similar statement must also be filed with a broadcasting company when time for a radio or television political ad is secured. The

statement filed with the broadcasting company must be available for public inspection.

The "responsible party" is: the candidate, if the ad is sponsored by a candidate or a candidate's political committee; the chief officer or treasurer of a political committee, if the ad is sponsored by a political committee other than a candidate's committee; and the sponsor of the ad, if it is paid for by an independent entity. Responsibility for complying with the political advertising portion of the disclosure law is expanded to include the responsible party.

The Public Disclosure Commission must, by rule, exempt from this requirement certain forms of advertising, such as buttons, pens, and skywriting, and may exempt other forms where such a statement is impractical.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

This form of disclosure requirement takes a step forward to reducing unfounded negative campaigning. Those tempted to do so may think twice.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Graham Johnson, Public Disclosure Comm. (pro)