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SENATE BILL 5414

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau, Winsley, McCaslin, Keiser, Swecker, T. Sheldon, Morton, Stevens, Brandland, Mulliken, Franklin, B. Sheldon, Regala, Fraser, Carlson, Kline, Parlette, Schmidt, McAuliffe, Oke, Rasmussen and Shin

Read first time 01/24/2003. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to information on the fiscal and policy impact of  
2 state ballot measures; amending RCW 29.79.075 and 29.81.250; adding a  
3 new section to chapter 29.79 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a more informed  
6 voter is a better voter. Most of the time, initiatives do not truly  
7 reveal their intent to voters and what their costs might be. It is  
8 necessary that full disclosure be made. Occasionally, initiative  
9 supporters are not aware of the unintended consequences of their  
10 attempts to establish laws by the initiative process. Therefore, the  
11 legislature further finds that the initiative process must be protected  
12 and accountable.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29.79.075 and 2002 c 139 s 1 are each amended to read  
14 as follows:

15 The office of financial management, in consultation with the  
16 secretary of state, the attorney general, and any other appropriate  
17 state or local agency, shall prepare a fiscal impact statement for each  
18 of the following state ballot measures: (1) An initiative to the

1 people that is certified to the ballot; (2) an initiative to the  
2 legislature that will appear on the ballot; (3) an alternative measure  
3 appearing on the ballot that the legislature proposes to an initiative  
4 to the legislature; (4) a referendum bill referred to voters by the  
5 legislature; and (5) a referendum measure appearing on the ballot.  
6 Fiscal impact statements must be written in clear and concise language  
7 and avoid legal and technical terms when possible, and may include  
8 easily understood graphics.

9 ~~((A fiscal impact))~~ The statement prepared by the office of  
10 financial management must describe any projected increase or decrease  
11 in the sales tax or other appropriate existing state revenues, costs,  
12 expenditures, or indebtedness that the state or local governments will  
13 experience if the ballot measure were approved by state voters.

14 Where appropriate, a fiscal impact statement may include both  
15 estimated dollar amounts and a description placing the estimated dollar  
16 amounts into context. A fiscal impact statement must include both a  
17 summary of not to exceed one hundred words and a more detailed  
18 statement that includes the assumptions that were made to develop the  
19 fiscal impacts.

20 Fiscal impact statements must be available online from the  
21 secretary of state's web site and included in the state voters'  
22 pamphlet.

23 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 29.79 RCW  
24 to read as follows:

25 For a ballot measure that proposes to reduce, in any way, revenues  
26 for state government or indirectly for local governments, the ballot  
27 measure proponents shall explain clearly in a prepared statement which  
28 government services or programs should be reduced or eliminated as a  
29 result of the decrease in revenues.

30 Sec. 4. RCW 29.81.250 and 2002 c 139 s 2 are each amended to read  
31 as follows:

32 The secretary of state shall determine the format and layout of the  
33 voters' pamphlet. The secretary of state shall print the pamphlet in  
34 clear, readable type on a size, quality, and weight of paper that in  
35 the judgment of the secretary of state best serves the voters. The  
36 pamphlet must contain a table of contents. Federal and state offices

1 must appear in the pamphlet in the same sequence as they appear on the  
2 ballot. Measures and arguments must be printed in the order specified  
3 by RCW 29.79.300.

4 The voters' pamphlet must provide the following information for  
5 each statewide issue on the ballot:

6 (1) The legal identification of the measure by serial designation  
7 or number;

8 (2) The official ballot title of the measure;

9 (3) A statement prepared by the attorney general explaining the law  
10 as it presently exists;

11 (4) A statement prepared by the attorney general explaining the  
12 effect of the proposed measure if it becomes law;

13 (5) The fiscal impact statements prepared under RCW 29.79.075;

14 (6) The service or program reduction statement by the proponents of  
15 the ballot measure;

16 (7) The total number of votes cast for and against the measure in  
17 the senate and house of representatives, if the measure has been passed  
18 by the legislature;

19 ~~((+7))~~ (8) An argument advocating the voters' approval of the  
20 measure together with any statement in rebuttal of the opposing  
21 argument;

22 ~~((+8))~~ (9) An argument advocating the voters' rejection of the  
23 measure together with any statement in rebuttal of the opposing  
24 argument;

25 ~~((+9))~~ (10) Each argument or rebuttal statement must be followed  
26 by the names of the committee members who submitted them, and may be  
27 followed by a telephone number that citizens may call to obtain  
28 information on the ballot measure;

29 ~~((+10))~~ (11) The full text of each measure.

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