
**State Government Operations &
Accountability Committee**

ESB 6522

Brief Description: Concerning campaign contributions made by out-of-state entities.

Sponsors: Senators Benton, Kastama, Roach, Berkey, Benson, Zarelli, Stevens, Delvin, Honeyford and Schmidt.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires out-of-state political committees to report the name, address, and employer of each person or corporation contributing more than \$1350 in the current calendar year if that committee participates in an election within the state;
- Extends the same reporting requirements for out-of-state committees as for in-state committees; and
- Exempts out-of-state political committees from reporting only if they are required to file campaign reports with the Federal Election Commission and the federal reports contain the same information as required by the state and are available for public inspection on or before the date that a state filing would be required.

Hearing Date: 2/22/06

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Disclosure for In-state Political Committees

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) enforces campaign finance laws for political committees participating in state elections. A political committee is any person (except a candidate or an individual dealing with his or her own resources) who expects to receive contributions or make expenditures to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure. This includes political parties, political action committees, one-issue groups that disband after a single election, and proponents and opponents of state or local ballot measures that raise or spend money to support or oppose that measure.

Within two weeks of forming, or receiving or spending funds, an in-state political committee must file a statement of organization with the PDC and file monthly contribution and expenditure

reports, as long as the total expenditures and contributions exceed \$200. If the committee is involved in an election, weekly reports must be filed beginning four months before a special or general election. Special reports are required 21 days before an election, current to within five business days, and seven days before an election, current to within one business day. Late contributions and expenditures of \$1,000 or more must be reported if made or received within seven days of a primary election or 21 days of a general election.

Disclosure for Out-of-state Political Committees

The Federal Elections Commission (FEC) enforces campaign finance laws for political committees participating in federal elections. Political committees participating in federal elections must file a statement of organization, and detailed quarterly reports of contribution and expenditure activity. During a federal election year, political committees must file monthly reports to the FEC, due on the 20th day of the following month.

An out-of-state political committee that supports or opposes candidates or ballot measures in this state must submit a report to the PDC when it makes an expenditure supporting or opposing a Washington state candidate or political committee. The committee must file the following information:

- the committee's name and address;
- the purpose of the committee;
- names, addresses and titles of its officers or responsible leaders;
- name, office sought, and party affiliation of each candidate in the state of Washington that the committee is supporting or opposing;
- ballot proposition supported or opposed;
- name and address of each person residing in the state or corporation which has a place of business in the state who has made one or more contributions to the out-of-state committee in the aggregate of more than \$25 during the current calendar year;
- the name and address of each person in the state to whom the committee gave a contribution of \$50 or more, the purpose of the expenditure, and total sum of such expenditures; and
- any other information as required by the PDC.

Out of state political committees must abide by the contribution limits of the state. If an out-of-state committee is required to file campaign reports with the federal election commission, the committee is exempted from in-state reporting.

Summary of Bill:

Reporting requirements for out-of-state political committees participating in elections in Washington are changed. In addition to the name and address of an individual contributor, a person's employer must also be included. Information on contributors is no longer limited to residents or businesses in Washington state. It must include information for all contributors who contribute in the aggregate of more than \$1350 in the current calendar year. Out-of-state committees are subjected to the same reporting dates as in-state committees.

Out-of-state political committees are exempted from in-state reporting only if they are required to file campaign reports with the Federal Election Commission and the federal reports: 1) contain the same information as required by the state, and 2) are available for public inspection on or before the date that a state filing would be required.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2006.

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