

HB 1186-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Declares that the intent of this act is to protect the fairness of elections for the highest courts in Washington state - the supreme court and court of appeals. Doing so will maintain the public's trust in the integrity and independence of our courts in the face of increasingly large sums of money raised and spent by special interest groups. That flood of money threatens the impartiality, independence, and credibility of our judiciary.

Provides that, to maintain public confidence in the judiciary, we must prevent not only corruption, but the appearance of corruption, for the judiciary is the one branch of government that must be uniquely impartial, independent, and unbiased in order to best serve the residents of Washington. It would be destructive for our democracy to allow our courts to become influenced by large amounts of money, and for our citizens to think that judicial decisions are influenced by those large amounts of money. This act is necessary to ensure that our highest courts continue to be unbiased and insulated from special interests.

Establishes the judicial election reform act as an alternative source of financing candidates for the Washington supreme court and court of appeals who demonstrate public support and voluntarily accept strict fund-raising and spending limits.

Expires January 1, 2013. By January 1, 2012, the public disclosure commission shall report to the governor and to the legislature on the effectiveness of the judicial election reform act.

Provides that the act shall be null and void if appropriations are not approved.