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HOUSE BILL 1654

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

**By** Representatives Alexander, Bailey, Herrera, Angel, Kristiansen, Newhouse, Hope, McCune, Walsh, Short, Ross, Haler, Anderson, Smith, Klippert, Roach, Ericksen, Shea, Pearson, Schmick, Orcutt, Condotta, Johnson, Cox, Priest, Hinkle, Parker, Warnick, Dammeier, Kretz, Rodne, Williams, Campbell, and Armstrong

Read first time 01/27/09. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a period of public and legislative  
2 review of appropriations legislation; adding new sections to chapter  
3 44.04 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds that approval of the state budget is the most  
8 important act of the legislature in any year, having profound  
9 consequences for every resident of the state. The legislature further  
10 finds that the public is entitled to a reasonable opportunity to learn  
11 how public funds are proposed to be expended before bills making  
12 appropriations become law. The legislature further finds that public  
13 notice, dissemination of information, and informed analysis of proposed  
14 budgets is an essential requisite of transparent, accountable  
15 government.

16 The state constitution charges the legislature, and only the  
17 legislature, with the responsibility to fund the operation of state  
18 government through the enactment of appropriations legislation. Yet  
19 the abbreviated time frame in which the legislature acts on omnibus

1 operating appropriations legislation permits little opportunity for  
2 informed legislative deliberation or public review and discussion,  
3 which in turn impairs public trust in government. The legislature  
4 finds that many other states, in their constitutions, statutes, or  
5 legislative rules, require a reasonable opportunity for public and  
6 legislative review of budget legislation.

7 The legislature therefore finds that it is in the public interest  
8 to provide for an appropriate period of public and legislative review  
9 of all omnibus appropriations bills before they are acted on by the  
10 legislature and submitted to the governor for approval.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW  
12 to read as follows:

13 An omnibus operating, capital, or transportation appropriations  
14 bill, or any other bill that implements an omnibus operating, capital,  
15 or transportation appropriations bill and is effective for the same  
16 period as such appropriations bill, must be made publicly available to  
17 the members of the legislature and the public at least five calendar  
18 days before such a bill may be voted on by the senate or the house of  
19 representatives.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act shall be known and cited as the  
21 budget sunshine act.

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