

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1819

As Passed House:
March 11, 2015

Title: An act relating to making an appointment to inspect the books of account of a political committee or a candidate committee.

Brief Description: Concerning appointments to inspect the books of account of a political committee or a candidate committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Wilson, Griffey, Dent, Van Werven, Caldier, Pike, Shea, Vick, Harmsworth and Condotta.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/17/15, 2/18/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/15, 67-31.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that a person wishing to inspect the books of account of a candidate or political committee must provide his or her telephone number at the time of making an appointment, and photo identification before inspecting the books of account.
- Allows a treasurer of a candidate or political committee to refuse to show the books of account to a person who does not make an appointment or provide identification.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregory and Hawkins.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Appleton.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

In 1972 the voters passed Initiative 276, which required the disclosure of campaign finances, lobbyist activities, and financial affairs of elective officers and candidates. The initiative created the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), a five-member, bipartisan citizen commission, to enforce the provisions of the campaign finance disclosure law.

The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following the passage of Initiative 134. The initiative imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for statewide and legislative office, further regulated independent expenditures, and restricted the use of public funds for political purposes.

Every political committee is required to file a statement of organization with the PDC within two weeks of its organization or within two weeks after the date the committee expects to either receive contributions or make expenditures in any election campaign, whichever is earlier. The statement of organization must include, among other things, the name and address of its treasurer and depository.

Political committees must report contributions and expenditures to the PDC on a monthly basis as long as contributions or expenditures exceed \$200 since the last report. A listing of the names and addresses of persons making contributions of \$25 or more must be included in the report.

The treasurer is required to maintain books of account that accurately reflect all contributions and expenditures. The books of account must be open for public inspection all business days between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., eight days before and up to the day of the election. An inspection must be allowed within 24 hours of the time the appointment is made. It is a violation to refuse to allow or keep an appointment for an inspection of the books of account as specified by law.

Summary of Bill:

A person wishing to inspect the books of account must provide the treasurer with his or her telephone number, and must provide photo identification prior to inspecting the books of account. A treasurer may refuse to show the books of account to any person who does not make an appointment or provide the required identification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Candidate books of account must be open for inspection, but no telephone number for the person requesting an inspection is required. Books of account may contain

sensitive information, such as account numbers on checks, credit card numbers, and donor information. This information is available to anyone. The provisions in the bill will afford some protections about who is requesting inspection. Treasurers often do the books at their homes and photo identification will make them more comfortable about letting these people in their homes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Wilson, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.