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**State Government, Elections &  
Information Technology Committee**

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**HB 2106**

**Brief Description:** Concerning election year restrictions on state legislators.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Koster, Hudgins, Taylor and Shea.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Changes the election year restriction period for legislative mailings to end on the date of the general election, instead of the end of November.
- Requires that legislators' permitted communications with constituents during the election restriction period applies during the legislative session until the beginning of the candidate filing period, or during a special session.
- Provides that the period restricting updates to legislators' web sites runs from the beginning of the candidate filing period until the date of the general election.

**Hearing Date:** 2/17/17

**Staff:** Sean Flynn (786-7124).

**Background:**

With some exceptions, state officers and employees are prohibited from using state agency facilities and resources to assist with any election campaign. State legislators are specifically restricted from certain activities during the period starting December 1 of the year before the legislator's general election through November 30 after the election. In addition, legislators may not update their official legislative web pages between June 30 and November 15 of their election year. Violations of the communication restrictions are subject to enforcement by the Legislative Ethics Board.

During the restriction period, legislators are may not send constituents letters or other literature by mail or email at public expense. However, legislators may mail two general newsletters to

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constituents before and after the regular legislative session. Legislators also may send mail and email to individual constituents who request information during the legislative session.

**Summary of Bill:**

The election year restriction period during which a state legislator may not send literature to constituents is shortened to end on the day after the election. The periods for certain permitted activities are aligned with the beginning of the candidate filing period, two weeks before Memorial Day. The two permitted newsletters must be mailed before the beginning of the candidate filing period. Legislators may mail or email updates to constituents on distribution lists during the legislative session until the beginning of the candidate filing period, as well as during any special legislative session. Finally, the freeze on updating a legislator's official website starts with the candidate filing period and goes through the general election.

**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.