
**State Government & Tribal Relations
Committee**

HB 2398

Brief Description: Prohibiting the statements of financial affairs filed by a professional staff member of the legislature from being posted online.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Smith, Ryu and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the Public Disclosure Commission from posting online any Statements of Financial Affairs for professional staff members of the Legislature.

Hearing Date: 1/14/20

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Statements of Financial Affairs.

Every year, all elected officials and state executive officers must file a Statement of Financial Affairs for the preceding calendar year with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC). Statements are also required of every candidate for such elected offices. These statements are called F-1 statements. According to the PDC, the F-1s are intended to allow the public to assess whether state officials may have conflicts of interest.

"Executive state officer" is defined to include the director of many state agencies, councils, and commissions. It also includes every professional staff member off the Office of the Governor and of the Legislature.

Subject to certain monetary thresholds, the F-1 statements must include information about a person's:

- bank accounts, savings accounts, and insurance policies;

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.

- debts;
- other public or private offices, directorships, and positions as a trustee;
- other sources of compensation;
- real property ownership and interests in Washington; and
- acceptance of food, beverage, and gifts.

The PDC may also require other information in an F-1 statement as it deems necessary.

Upon request, the PDC may suspend or modify any of the F-1 reporting requirements if the majority of the commissioners find that the requirements impose a manifestly unreasonable hardship and the suspension or modification will not frustrate the PDC's purpose.

In 2019 the Legislature passed House Bill 1195, which in relevant part specified that the F-1 statements are public records but prohibited the PDC from posting any F-1 statements online. The Governor vetoed this section, however.

Summary of Bill:

While F-1 statements filed by professional staff members of the Legislature remain subject to public disclosure upon request, the PDC may not post their F-1 statements online. This prohibition applies to legislative staff members' F-1 statements filed both before and after the effective date of this section.

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.