

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1782

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
State Government & Tribal Relations

**Title:** An act relating to amending the timeline for reporting campaign contributions and expenditures.

**Brief Description:** Amending the timeline for reporting campaign contributions and expenditures.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Marshall, Barkis, Dufault and Pollet.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/12/25, 2/19/25 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Amends the intervals for reporting contributions and expenditures to the Public Disclosure Commission.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Mena, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Waters, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Doglio and Farivar.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Connor Schiff (786-7093).

**Background:**

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

In 1972 voters passed Initiative 276, which required the disclosure of campaign finances, lobbyist activities, financial affairs of elected officers and candidates, and access to public records. 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 PDC has the authority to develop procedures, adopt rules, investigate complaints, and enforce the laws relating to campaign disclosure and contributions, including the imposing of civil penalties.

Subsequently in 1992, the Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted following passage of Initiative 134. Initiative 134 imposed campaign contribution limits on elections for statewide and legislative office, further regulated independent expenditures, restricted the use of public funds for political purposes, and required public officials to report gifts.

Candidates and political committees are required to file certain information with the PDC, including all contributions received and expenditures made. Contribution and expenditure reports must include certain information, including: 1) the funds on hand at the beginning of a reporting period; 2) identifying information for each person who contributed funds and the money value of the contribution; 3) loans, promissory notes, or security instrument to be used by the candidate or political committee; and 4) identifying information of each person to whom an expenditure of a certain amount was made.

Candidates and political committees must file the contribution and expenditure reports at specific intervals, including on the twenty-first day and seventh day immediately preceding the date on which the election is held. Sponsors of independent expenditures must also file expenditure reports on those dates. These reports must include all contributions received and expenditures made as of the end of one business day before the date of the report.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The intervals for filing contribution and expenditure reports are amended. Candidates and political committees must file the reports on the twentieth day and sixth day immediately preceding the date on which the election is held, rather than on the twenty-first and seventh days, respectively. The reports must include all contributions received and expenditures made as of the end of two business days before the date of the report, rather than as of the end of one business day before the date of the report. The same date changes are made to independent expenditure reports.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill requires independent expenditure reports to be filed on the twentieth day and sixth day preceding the date of an election, rather than on the twenty-first day and seventh day preceding the date of an election. The substitute bill also requires independent expenditure reports to include information for expenditures made up to the end of two

business days before the date of the report, rather than up to the end of one business day before the date of the report.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is supported by treasurers who work on campaign finances. The current 24 hour time period to report is very challenging. Reports are frequently amended because of the short turnaround time. This proposal would provide an extra time buffer. Additional time would increase accuracy. The intent is to have initial reports contain accurate information so that reports do not have to be amended. In other jurisdictions, treasurers have between 3 and 15 days to report expenditures and contributions. With this bill, Washington would still have one of the fastest turnaround times for these reports. This bill was developed with bipartisan work. Reporting requirements have become more complicated and burdensome, which impacts the timely preparation of reports. There is a limited pool of campaign treasurers; more time would allow treasurers to take on more clients. Many campaigns miss the reporting deadline by one day because they have to track down more information.

(Opposed) The provision is part of request legislation from the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC). The intent is to assist treasurers with valid concerns. The PDC is looking to better calibrate reporting periods with the vote-by-mail system. With the move to mail-in voting, the time period for voting begins earlier and there is a lot of activity earlier in the election cycle. The PDC legislation would have added a new reporting date to accommodate the increase in earlier activity. Standing alone, the shift closer to the election deadline moves away from the PDC's proposal. The PDC is not ready to reintroduce its legislation because there have been a lot of complaints and there should not be changes made when there are a lot of complaints. The PDC wants to take a more comprehensive look at the reporting schedule to make it more predictable, improve transparency, and help filers. The change should be comprehensive.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Matt Marshall, prime sponsor; Conner Edwards, Professional Campaign Treasurer and CG Edwards PLLAC; and Jason Michaud, Professional Campaign Treasurer.

(Opposed) Sean Flynn, Public Disclosure Commission.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.**