
SENATE BILL 5243

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa, Shewmake, and Trudeau

Read first time 01/14/25. Referred to Committee on State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to restricting the use of health care premiums
2 for political lobbying; adding a new chapter to Title 29B RCW; and
3 prescribing penalties.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 (1) During the COVID-19 pandemic spanning multiple years many
7 persons, companies, and governments lost huge sums of income and
8 reserves through job loss, loss of employees, added expenses, and
9 interruptions in their ability to conduct their trade for extended
10 periods. In contrast, many health insurance companies reported
11 enormous profits during this time and used those profits to take
12 advantage of stock buybacks and increase CEO and executive pay, and
13 rather than passing on those profits to their policyholders in the
14 form of reduced premiums and increased benefits they instead
15 continued to lobby elected officials and governments for increases in
16 insurance premium rates.

17 (2) The voters of the state of Washington require immediate
18 action to be assured that funds collected by their health insurance
19 companies will be used for the health care needs of policyholders.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
2 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
3 otherwise:

4 (1) "Health insurance company" has the same meaning as "health
5 carrier" as defined in RCW 48.43.005.

6 (2) "Policyholder" means a person or group of persons who have
7 entered into a contractual arrangement or on whose behalf a
8 contractual arrangement has been entered into with a health insurance
9 company to receive health care services.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Health insurance companies operating
11 within the state of Washington and offering health insurance policies
12 for the benefit of policyholders may not use premiums collected from
13 those policyholders for lobbying or to make contributions to
14 candidates for state and federal elected offices.

15 (2) Health insurance companies operating within the state of
16 Washington and offering health insurance policies for the benefit of
17 policyholders may not make contributions to political committees
18 using funds collected as premiums from policyholders. Health
19 insurance companies may make contributions from those policyholders'
20 funds that have been voluntarily and with express permission received
21 as a contribution to a separate political committee to be used for
22 political lobbying on the behalf of and for the benefit of those
23 policyholders.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The commission shall enforce the
25 provisions of this chapter. In the course of this duty, the
26 commission may request documentation from the office of the insurance
27 commissioner and may use any evidence provided by a policyholder.

28 (2) Any health insurance company found to have violated the
29 provisions of this chapter is liable to their policyholders for at
30 least two times the amount of any unlawful contribution to any
31 candidate or political committee.

32 (3) If there is found to be any lobbying in violation of this
33 chapter, the health insurance company shall be fined no less than
34 \$25,000 and no more than \$500,000 for each violation, to be adjusted
35 annually by the commission based on the consumer price index as
36 published by the United States bureau of labor statistics or their
37 successor.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The provisions of this chapter are to be
2 liberally construed to effectuate its broad intent, policies, and
3 purposes.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 and 8 of this act
5 constitute a new chapter in Title 29B RCW.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** If any provision of this act or its
7 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
8 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
9 persons or circumstances is not affected.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** This act may be known and cited as the
11 health care dollars for health care act.

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