
SENATE BILL 5842

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Wagoner, Shewmake, and J. Wilson

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1 AN ACT Relating to the display of previous campaign memorabilia
2 within a legislative office; and amending RCW 42.52.180.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 42.52.180 and 2025 c 377 s 14 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the
7 use of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the
8 purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office
9 or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition.
10 Knowing acquiescence by a person with authority to direct, control,
11 or influence the actions of the state officer or state employee using
12 public resources in violation of this section constitutes a violation
13 of this section. Facilities of an agency include, but are not limited
14 to, use of stationery, postage, machines, and equipment, use of state
15 employees of the agency during working hours, vehicles, office space,
16 publications of the agency, and clientele lists of persons served by
17 the agency.

18 (2) Subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to the
19 following activities:

20 (a) Action taken at an open public meeting by members of an
21 elected legislative body to express a collective decision, or to

1 actually vote upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, or
2 ordinance, or to support or oppose a ballot proposition as long as
3 (i) required notice of the meeting includes the title and number of
4 the ballot proposition, and (ii) members of the legislative body or
5 members of the public are afforded an approximately equal opportunity
6 for the expression of an opposing view;

7 (b) A statement by an elected official in support of or in
8 opposition to any ballot proposition at an open press conference or
9 in response to a specific inquiry. For the purposes of this
10 subsection, it is not a violation of this section for an elected
11 official to respond to an inquiry regarding a ballot proposition, to
12 make incidental remarks concerning a ballot proposition in an
13 official communication, or otherwise comment on a ballot proposition
14 without an actual, measurable expenditure of public funds. The ethics
15 boards shall adopt by rule a definition of measurable expenditure;

16 (c) (i) The maintenance of official legislative websites
17 throughout the year, regardless of pending elections. The websites
18 may contain any discretionary material which was also specifically
19 prepared for the legislator in the course of his or her official
20 duties as a legislator, including newsletters and press releases.

21 (ii) The official legislative websites of legislators seeking
22 reelection or election to any office shall not be altered, other than
23 during a special legislative session or to change office contact
24 information, beginning on the first day of the declaration of
25 candidacy filing period specified in RCW 29A.24.050 through the date
26 of certification by the secretary of state of the general election of
27 the election year. As used in this subsection, "legislator" means a
28 legislator who is a "candidate," as defined in RCW 29B.10.090, for
29 any public office. "Legislator" does not include a member of the
30 legislature who has announced their retirement from elected public
31 office and who does not file a declaration of candidacy by the end of
32 the candidacy filing period specified in RCW 29A.24.050.

33 (iii) The website shall not be used for campaign purposes;

34 (d) Activities that are part of the normal and regular conduct of
35 the office or agency;

36 (e) De minimis use of public facilities by statewide elected
37 officials and legislators incidental to the preparation or delivery
38 of permissible communications, including written and verbal
39 communications initiated by them of their views on ballot

1 propositions that foreseeably may affect a matter that falls within
2 their constitutional or statutory responsibilities; (~~and~~)

3 (f) Activities with a legislative nexus as described under RCW
4 42.52.175. For the official legislative website of a legislator, this
5 subsection is subject to subsection (2)(c)(ii) of this section.
6 Official legislative websites that are not the official legislative
7 website of a legislator are not subject to subsection (2)(c)(ii) of
8 this section but may not directly or indirectly reference a ballot
9 measure or legislator running for elected office, during the period
10 described in subsection (2)(c)(ii) of this section; and

11 (g) The display of previous campaign memorabilia within a
12 legislative office.

13 (3) As to state officers and employees, this section operates to
14 the exclusion of RCW 29B.45.010.

15 (4) As used in this section(~~(7-"official")~~):

16 (a) "Official legislative website" includes, but is not limited
17 to, a legislator's official legislative social media accounts.

18 (b) "Previous campaign memorabilia" includes signs, banners,
19 flags, flyers, posters, boards, buttons, stickers, or other display
20 materials from a previous political campaign that is no longer active
21 and are used for historical, commemorative, or decorative purposes.

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