
State Government & Tribal Affairs
Committee

HB 1474

Brief Description: Providing for electronic filing and disclosure of campaign finance reports.

Sponsors: Representative Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires lobbyists, lobbyist employers, and state agencies to file lobbying reports over the Internet.
- Assesses a one-time fee to lobbyists, lobbyist employers, and agencies for the purpose of developing and implementing a system for reporting lobbying disclosure reports.
- Assesses a yearly fee to political committees, lobbyists, lobbyist employers required to file reports, to certain state and local governments, and to individuals required to file personal financial affairs statements.

Hearing Date: 2/9/11

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created and empowered by an initiative of the people to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates, and to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.

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.

In 1999 electronic filing was made available to candidates, public officials, and political committees for filing financial affairs reports, contribution reports, and expenditure reports. By 2002 electronic filing was mandatory. Electronic filing was made available to lobbyists and lobbyist employers for submitting their reports in 2002, although it is not mandatory. Electronic filing includes, but is not limited to, filing by diskette, modem, satellite, or over the Internet.

Funding was made available to the PDC in the fiscal year 2008 budget for a feasibility study to determine the cost to design, develop, implement, and maintain an application to accommodate electronic filing by lobbyists, lobbyist employers, public agencies and a database and query system compatible with current computer architecture, technology, and operating systems.

Summary of Bill:

Agencies required to report lobbying expenditures must file all required reports to the PDC electronically over the internet. Beginning July 1, 2012, all lobbyists and lobbyists' employers required to report lobbying activities must file the required reports electronically over the internet.

Initial Fees.

Lobbyists and lobbyists' employers who are registered or required to report for calendar year 2011 must pay an initial fee to the PDC for the development and implementation of an electronic filing system. Fees must be used to establish the software and hardware needed to establish an electronic filing system for lobbyists and lobbyist employers. Fees are as follows:

- \$250 for each lobbyist earning \$10,000 or more for the previous calendar year, or \$10,000 or more for the current calendar year;
- \$500 for each lobbyist employer whose expenses and payments for lobbying is \$10,000 or more for the previous calendar year, or is expected to be \$10,000 or more for the current calendar year;
- \$150 for every state agency that has more than 50 full-time employees; and
- \$150 for every local government that employs a lobbyist.

Annual Fees.

Beginning January 1, 2012, an annual fee must be paid to the PDC for data development costs and purchase and maintenance of computer hardware and software to maintain electronic filing of reports required by the PDC. Fees are as follows:

- \$200 for political committees required to file reports;
- \$200 for every lobbyist and lobbyist employers required to file reports;
- \$150 for state agencies that have 50 or more full time equivalent employees;
- \$150 for local governments that employ a lobbyist; and
- \$200 for every individual required to file personal financial affairs statements.

No person or individual must pay more than one fee in a calendar year.

Account Created.

The Public Disclosure Electronic Filing Account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. Receipts collected under the act must be deposited into the account and may be used only for costs incurred as a result of the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of computer hardware and software to accommodate electronic filing and a database and query

system compatible with current systems that result in readily available data to the public for review and analysis. Only the executive director of the PDC, or his or her designee, may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for sections 2, 4, 5, and 7 which take effect January 1, 2012.