

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6208

As of February 3, 2016

Title: An act relating to standardizing disclosure requirements for political committees.

Brief Description: Standardizing disclosure requirements for political committees.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Carlyle and Mullet; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 1/19/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: An organization is considered a political committee if one of its primary purposes is to affect governmental decision making by supporting or opposing candidates or ballot measures. Within two weeks after organization or two weeks after the committee first has the expectation of receiving contributions or making expenditures, a political committee organized in the state of Washington must file a statement of organization with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) stating the following information:

- the committee's name and address, as well as those of any affiliated committees or persons, and their relationship or affiliation;
- the names, addresses, and titles of its officers or leaders;
- the name and address of the committee's treasurer and depository;
- whether the committee is a continuing political committee;
- the candidates, parties, and ballot measures supported or opposed by the committee;
- how the committee intends to dispose of surplus funds, if any, at dissolution;
- the address of the place and the hours during which the committee will make its account books and reports available for public inspection;
- the name, address, and title of each person who authorizes expenditures or makes decisions on behalf of the committee;
- the name, address, and title of each person who performs ministerial functions on behalf of the committee and another committee or candidate; and
- other information that the PDC may prescribe by rule.

Political committees organized outside Washington must file organizational statements with the PDC when making a contribution or expenditure in a Washington election, but are

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.

required to make more limited disclosures. Such committees must disclose the following information:

- the committee's name and address;
- the committee's purpose;
- the names, addresses, and titles of its officers or leaders;
- the candidates, parties, and ballot measures supported or opposed by the committee;
- the name, address, and aggregate contribution amount of each Washington resident or corporation contributing more than \$25 to the committee, and the date and amount of each contribution;
- the name, address, employer and aggregate contribution amount of each out-of-state resident or corporation contributing more than \$2,550 to the committee, and the date and amount of each contribution;
- the name and address of any person in Washington to whom the committee expended more than \$50; and
- other information that the PDC may prescribe by rule.

Summary of Bill: Political committees organized out of state must follow the same disclosure requirements as political committees organized in the state of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill harmonizes the requirements for in-state and out-of-state committees. It promotes fairness and transparency and simplifies the law. Political committees are becoming more numerous and active. Voters appreciate more information about who is behind a political committee and how it is funded.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Billig, prime sponsor; Evelyn Lopez, Public Disclosure Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.