

Fair Elections - Legislative proposals for Washington State 2011 session

I. SB 5010 - "Judicial bill" - optional public financing for supreme court campaigns

Rework previous year's "judicial bill" (public financing for state supreme court races), (1) to revise how the proposed program would be financed [details to be described], and (2) to have it submitted to the voters as a referendum (which would appear on the November, 2011, ballot) - thereby requiring only a simple majority vote in the legislature (in compliance with newly-approved Initiative 1053).

II. SB 5021 - Disclosure bill

A bill to (1) clamp down on shadow PACs who pour tens of thousands of dollars into a single race without disclosing their funders, (2) strengthen the remedies available when disclosure requirements are violated, and (3) change the disclosure deadline, so voters have more time to study the information they need about a given race and the groups who are trying to influence it.

III. HB 1038 - proposed by Public Disclosure Commission:

Amend existing disclosure and reporting law, to require disclosure of who is conducting telephone campaign advertising, including robo-calls and "push polls" masquerading as surveys.

Proposed language: All telephone political advertising of five hundred or more identical or substantially similar calls in the twelve-month period prior to the election, whether relating to candidates or ballot propositions, including telephone political advertising conducted as a persuasive poll, shall include the sponsor's name, city and state clearly spoken or recorded. This telephone sponsor information shall be provided at the beginning of the call. [definitions also provided/included in the proposed amended language - defining "push polls", etc.]

IV. Support adequate funding and oversight authority for the Public Disclosure Commission.

Self-evident, as described.

V. Support appropriate reforms to the citizen ballot initiative process

Reform the ballot initiative process to protect against potential abuse and undue influence by moneyed interests during both the ballot measure signature-gathering and campaign/election phases.

VI. Support the adoption of resolutions and proposals regarding "corporate personhood":

Support adoption of resolutions to clarify that corporations are not "natural persons" for purposes of political speech - including if necessary a constitutional amendment so stating - and to permit regulation of corporate and other independent expenditures for political purposes so as to not overwhelm the voice of the citizen in government.