



March 5, 1980

TO: House Members, Washington State Legislature

FROM: Jolene Unsoeld

SUBJECT: SSB 3519 -- This year's omnibus P.D.C. bill.

Because this bill and the process by which it has come to the House were unfairly attacked in Monday's P.I., I would like to present a brief summary of SSB 3519. It actually represents about eighteen hours of testimony and debate in public hearings in the Senate Constitution and Elections Committee. It is a carefully balanced bill that has undergone intense scrutiny by all the citizen organizations as it was being worked in the Senate committee. Principal features are as follows:

Campaign Contribution Reporting

1. Reporting dates in and around an election are changed to whole-week denominations. Instead of filing reports 19 and 5 days before an election, they would be filed 3 weeks and 1 week before the election, etc.
2. A loophole from the original initiative would be plugged by requiring treasurers to retain records for five years.
3. Monthly reports during the period between campaigns would not have to be filed unless total contributions or total expenditures exceeded \$200.
4. The reporting threshold for campaign contributions would be raised from \$10 to \$25. (This is probably the only issue of real philosophical debate in the entire bill.)
5. C-3s would not have to be filed separate from the C-4 during non-campaign periods.

Lobbyist Reporting Requirements

1. Registration would be every two years rather than annually, with same provisions as now for filing a change in employer status whenever it occurs. Net result is really only to require pictures every other year rather than every year.
2. Lobbyists would be exempted from some inconsequential reporting requirements on their monthly reports. These include such items as telephone and office expenses, personal living and travel not associated with lobbying; expenses incurred for one's own living accommodations, and the number of the bills which are being lobbied. Unless one has a status sheet, the actual bill number is meaningless to the general public. An expansion of the present forms to allow for a description of lobbying activities would have considerable more meaning to the public.

Public Disclosure Commission

1. Would be permitted to go to any court of competent jurisdiction rather than just superior courts.
2. Provides for a toll-free hotline for answering questions (\$2,000 appropriation).
3. Repeals section of present law that provided for \$10 late-filing penalties. This has turned out to be a waste of taxpayer money and has bogged the P.D.C. down in administrative procedures and contested-case hearings trying to enforce hundreds of tiny infractions.

On the whole SSB 3519 is a balanced approach to amendments and deserves consideration by the House. No citizen group opposed it when it came out of the Senate Committee and it contains a number of small useful changes in the Disclosure Act.