

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2032

As Passed House:

January 25, 2024

Title: An act relating to reducing the size of yard signs that are exempt from certain political advertising disclosure requirements.

Brief Description: Reducing the size of yard signs that are exempt from certain political advertising disclosure requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Cheney, Low, Ramos and Graham.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/10/24, 1/12/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/25/24, 91-2.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Narrows the exemption from requirements to display sponsors and donors on political advertisement yard signs to apply only to signs that are 24 inches by 18 inches or smaller, rather than to signs no greater than 8 feet by 4 feet.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Cheney, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Under state law, political advertisements for candidates or ballot propositions must include certain disclosures:

- All advertisements must include the name of the sponsor.
- For candidates for partisan office, the candidate's party or independent preference must be included.
- If the advertisement is undertaken by someone other than a political party, it must state that no candidate authorized the advertisement, and it must include the name of who paid for it.
- If the advertisement is sponsored by a political committee, it must include a list of the committee's top five contributors; and if any of those contributors are political committees, a list of the top three donors to each committee must be included, and so on.

State law regulates the location, size, and display of such disclosures in visual or print advertisements.

Political advertisement yard signs that are 8 feet by 4 feet in size or smaller are exempt from the requirement to include the name of the sponsor, as well as the the committee's top five contributors and the top three donors to political committees.

Summary of Bill:

The exemption from disclosure requirements for political advertisement yard signs is narrowed to apply only to signs that are 24 inches by 18 inches or smaller.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Transparency in elections is a good thing, and in an era with more yard signs, the public deserves to know who is funding them and where the funding is coming from. The current exemption size standard appears to have been to match the size of plywood, which is relevant for signs that are to be read from the highway while driving. The idea for this bill came from local communities concerned about the proliferation of yard signs without any way to trace who is paying for them. Representative government works best when people know who is funding political campaigns.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Greg Cheney, prime sponsor; Cindy Madigan, League of Women Voters of Washington; and Sean Flynn, Public Disclosure Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Eric Pratt.