

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5170

Brief Description: Concerning funding and expenditures for legislative organizations by legislators who serve as elected leaders of those organizations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Hunt, Kuderer, Wilson, J., Hasegawa and Wilson, C.).

Senate Committee on State Government & Elections
House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations

Background: Ethics in Public Service Act. The Ethics in Public Service Act (Ethics Act) prohibits state officers and state employees from using their public employment for personal gain or private advantage, or to provide special privileges or exemptions for anyone else unless required to perform duties within the scope of their employment.

Gifts Under the Ethics in Public Service Act Generally. The Ethics Act generally prohibits a state officer or employee from accepting the following in a single year:

- gifts with an aggregate value in excess of \$50 from a single source; or
- a single gift from multiple sources with a value in excess of \$50.

A state officer or employee is prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gift that could reasonably be expected to influence the recipient's vote, action, or judgment.

Exemptions. The Legislature has adopted a number of exemptions to the general rule. In these circumstances, the \$50 value threshold does not apply and the gift is presumed not to influence the recipient. Examples include the following:

- unsolicited flowers;
- unsolicited tokens or awards of appreciation;
- food and beverage consumed at a hosted reception related to official duties;
- unsolicited gifts from dignitaries from another state or country;
- admission, including food and beverages, to events sponsored by a civic, charitable, governmental, or community organization; and
- gifts solicited on behalf of national legislative associations, the National Lieutenant Governors' Association, or the National Association of State Treasurers to host an official conference in the state.

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.

Summary: Legislators who serve as elected leaders of regional or national legislative associations and designated legislative employees may solicit gifts, grants, or donations to the regional or national legislative association for official conferences held outside the state. To qualify, the association must:

- exist for the purpose of supporting legislators in their official duties;
- include the Legislature as a member; and
- be supported in part by dues paid by the Legislature.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	1
House	85	13

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