

The background of the slide is a golden-yellow color with a dense, repeating pattern of various currency symbols (dollar, euro, yen, pound) in a 3D, embossed style. The symbols are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or overlapping, creating a textured, metallic effect.

# Financial affairs disclosure survey findings

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Public Disclosure Commission

June 2019

A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, featuring a golden-yellow background with various 3D-rendered financial symbols such as the dollar sign (\$), the pound sterling (£), the yen (¥), and the euro (€).

## Initiative 276

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*“The public’s right to know of the financing of political campaigns and lobbying and the financial affairs of elected officials and candidates far outweighs any right that these matters remain secret and private.”*

# How we got here

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- Washington state law has required the commission to attempt to make available via the website the public records submitted to it.
- F-1s remain the only required reporting that is not readily available to the public online.
- Many other states already make financial disclosures accessible and searchable online.
- In 2018, the commission decided to move forward with making the F-1s more readily available. Notice was sent to filers. Some had concerns, which prompted a pause.
- The Legislature this year amended HB 1195 to include a prohibition against the agency posting F-1s on the website. Gov. Inslee vetoed that section of the bill to allow the PDC to move forward with consideration of best approaches.



## Goals

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- Gauge support for online accessibility of F-1 information
- To identify areas for possible regulatory reform

We will use this information to clarify and expand what **we already know** about filers' needs and concerns, and the public interest in F-1 information.



# Survey plan

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- Ask audiences about information in the F-1 as a means to gauge sensitivities and priorities
- Use replies to determine:
  - If there are areas where public interests and privacy interests intersect to inform decisions on access
  - What information filers are providing that is of little use to the public in considering conflicts of interest
  - What information the public finds most helpful and may warrant additional disclosure

# Outreach

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- Email sent to 2018 and 2019 F-1 filers
- Email sent to PDC's public distribution list and F-1 public records requesters
- Survey info and link posted on PDC website
- Facebook post shared 20 times and reached 1,098 people
- Washington Coalition for Open Government and League of Women Voters of Washington distribution lists
- Individual contacts with more than 20 members of the media, state and national public interest groups, and legislative and executive branch



# Results

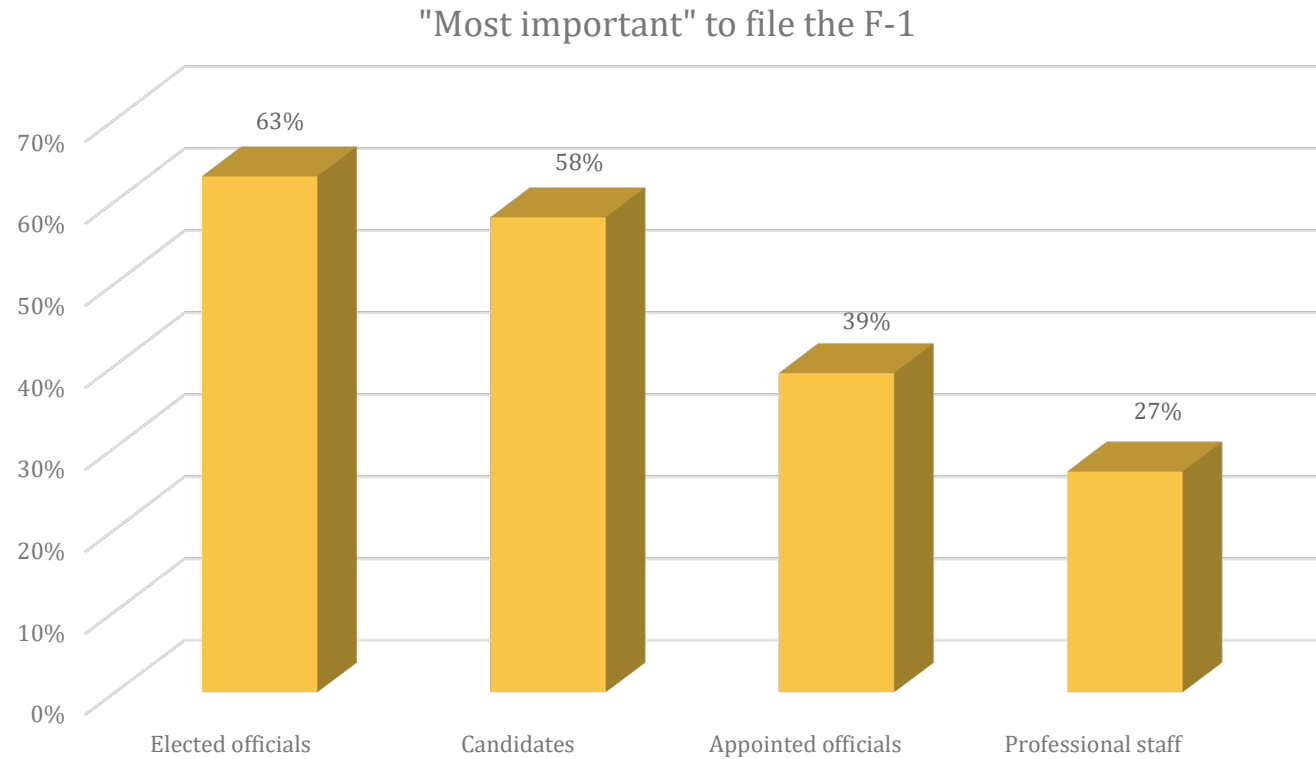
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- Survey received 1,400 responses
  - 1,260 reported having filed an F-1 in the past
- 87 percent of people who began survey completed it
- Survey took 7 minutes on average to complete

# Survey answers

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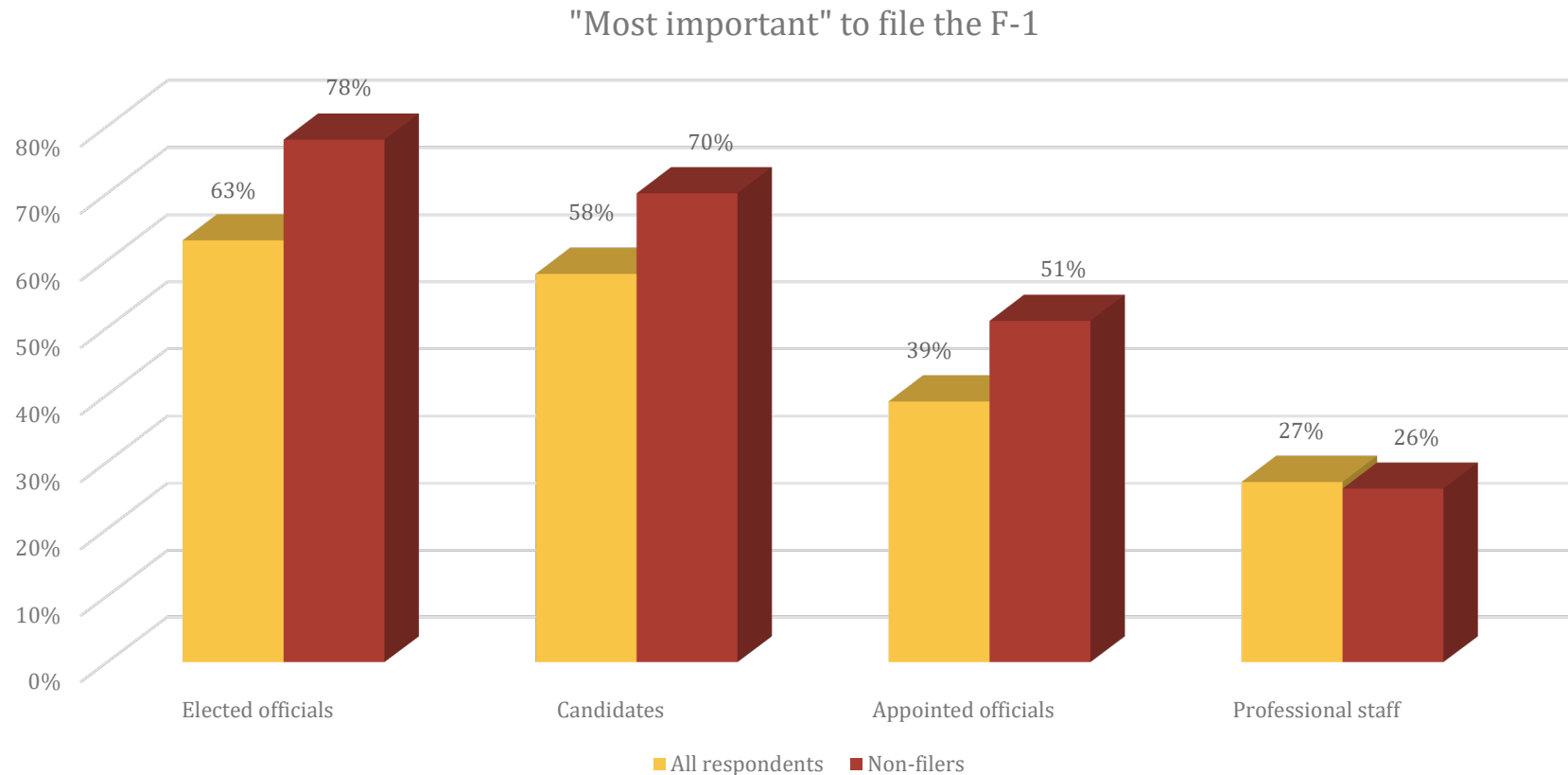
When asked who should file F-1s, respondents rated the following groups as “most important”:





# Survey answers

People who reported not having filed F-1s put more emphasis on elected officials and candidates:



# Survey answers

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We asked respondents to rate the importance of privacy concerns, public interest and ease of access for the kinds of information state law requires.

- F-1 filers consistently rated privacy concerns higher than non-filers did
- Non-filers consistently rated public interest higher than filers
- Ease of access tracked public interest – if respondents gave a certain kind of information a higher public interest rating, they were likely to also rate ease of access for that info higher

# Survey answers

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Despite the differences, there is a pattern in how F-1 filers and non-filers rated the considerations of privacy, public interest and access.

Both groups gave public interest the greatest weight for this info:

- Lobbying
- Business interests
- Who has complied

And both groups gave privacy the greatest weight for the following:

- Family names
- Assets
- Who has complied

# Survey answers

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## Where we see potential agreement:

- F-1 filers rated **family names** highest for privacy concerns (weighted average of 4.38 out of 5)
- Non-filers rated the same information highest for privacy (3.45) and lowest for public interest (3.71)

**Roughly 70 percent of each group said their primary concern was the disclosure of minor children's names**

- Non-filers rated **lobbying** and **business interests** highest for public interest (4.46 and 4.43, respectively)
- F-1 filers rated that information the lowest for privacy concerns (2.41 and 3.23)

# Survey answers

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## **Where we see potential disagreement:**

- Compensation, real estate and assets disclosures

These areas show the biggest gaps between the privacy concerns of F-1 filers and the public interest ratings of non-filers.

The groups are farthest apart on the value of asset information, with F-1 filers rating privacy concerns far more significant than non-filers (4.03 vs. 2.92), and non-filers rating public interest far more important than F-1 filers (4.15 vs. 3)



## Survey answers

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We tried to probe areas where we thought there might be room for changing the requirements to make reporting easier without loss to the public.

- Addresses of stocks
- High value of assets during reporting period
- Business customers of an org for which the filer serves as an officer

Staff believes the results were not conclusive. This may be an area where a proposal needs to precede outreach.

## Survey answers

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Anyone who gave a 4 or 5 rating to “ease of access” was asked if it would be a significant improvement for F-1 info to be provided immediately to requesters who supply an email address

- 78 percent of non-filers said yes
- 43 percent of filers said yes

The 25 percent of F-1 filers who never rated “ease of access” high were asked about an immediate delivery system:

- 90 percent said they would not support it

# Survey answers

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- Are you interested in providing more input?  
**252 people said yes**
- Are you interested in participating as part of the PDC project team building a new electronic filing system?  
**196 said yes**
- Anything else you want to tell us?  
**352 supplied comments**, of which 226 could be categorized into these areas: Access, Public Interest, Privacy, Regulatory Reform and Technology



# Schedule

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- Survey released June 13
- Present results to commission June 27
- Staff to email survey data to commission July 1
- Discussion about possible regulatory reform at July commission meeting
- Work group does deeper dive on access
- Commission decides next steps on F-1 accessibility and regulatory reform