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Committee approves ethics bill

BATON ROUGE - The Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee on Wednesday approved a new "glass pockets" bill that will require all elected officials in Louisiana as well as candidates to report the sources of any income of \$5,000 or more, but not the exact amounts.

The concept is that officials would be less likely to act in self-interest if financial conflicts were readily apparent to voters. The bill now goes to the Senate floor.

Over the objections of its author, Rep. Michael Jackson, D-Baton Rouge, the Senate panel insisted that House Bill 730 should include not just state elected officials, but also local elected officials.

Later Wednesday afternoon, the full Senate adopted a rival bill, Senate Bill 157 by Sen. Ron Marianneaux, D-Livonia, that took the requirement a step further by requiring all elected state and local officials to make public their federal income tax returns.

The Senate voted 29-8 in favor of requiring income tax disclosure. The Marianneaux bill now heads to a committee in the House, where "glass pockets" legislation is far less popular.

(John Hill)