Initiative Measure No. 1054

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SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF WASHINGTON

SAVE THE 2/3'S VOTE FOR TAX INCREASES

COMPLETE TEXT

AN ACT Relating to tax and fee increases imposed by state government; amending RCW 43.135.035 and 43.135.055; adding new sections to chapter 43.135 RCW; creating new sections; repealing RCW 43.135.035; and providing contingent effective dates.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

INTENT

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This initiative should deter the governor and the legislature from sidestepping, suspending or repealing any of Initiative 960's policies in the 2010 legislative session. But regardless of legislative action taken during the 2010 legislative session concerning Initiative 960's policies, the people intend, by the passage of this initiative, to require either two-thirds legislative approval or voter approval for tax increases, majority legislative approval for fee increases, and advisory votes for tax increases blocked from a public vote by using an emergency clause. These important policies ensure that taking more of the people's money will always be an absolute last resort.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS BY REQUIRING EITHER TWO-THIRDS LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OR VOTER APPROVAL FOR STATE GOVERNMENT TO RAISE TAXES

(sections 2 and 3 take effect if the 2010 legislature suspends or repeals the two-thirds legislative vote requirement for tax increases)

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section to chapter 43.135 RCW is added and reads as follows:

(1) After July 1, 1995, any action or combination of actions by the legislature that raises taxes may be taken only if approved by at

least two-thirds legislative approval in both the house of representatives and the senate. Pursuant to the referendum power set forth in Article II, section 1(b) of the state Constitution, tax increases may be referred to the voters for their approval or rejection at an election.

(2)(a) If the legislative action under subsection (1) of this section will result in expenditures in excess of the state expenditure limit, then the action of the legislature shall not take effect until approved by a vote of the people at a November general election. The state expenditure limit committee shall adjust the state expenditure limit by the amount of additional revenue approved by the voters under this section. This adjustment shall not exceed the amount of revenue generated by the legislative action during the first full fiscal year in which it is in effect. The state expenditure limit shall be adjusted downward upon expiration or repeal of the legislative action.

(b) The ballot title for any vote of the people required under this section shall be substantially as follows:

"Shall taxes be imposed on . . . . . in order to allow a spending increase above last year's authorized spending adjusted for personal income growth?"

(3)(a) The state expenditure limit may be exceeded upon declaration of an emergency for a period not to exceed twenty-four months by a law approved by a two-thirds vote of each house of the legislature and signed by the governor. The law shall set forth the nature of the emergency, which is limited to natural disasters that require immediate government action to alleviate human suffering and provide humanitarian assistance. The state expenditure limit may be exceeded for no more than twenty-four months following the declaration of the emergency and only for the purposes contained in the emergency declaration.

(b) Additional taxes required for an emergency under this section may be imposed only until thirty days following the next general election, unless an extension is approved at that general election.

The additional taxes shall expire upon expiration of the declaration of emergency. The legislature shall not impose additional taxes for emergency purposes under this subsection unless funds in the education construction fund have been exhausted.

(c) The state or any political subdivision of the state shall not impose any tax on intangible property listed in RCW 84.36.070 as that statute exists on January 1, 1993.

(4) If the cost of any state program or function is shifted from the state general fund to another source of funding, or if moneys are transferred from the state general fund to another fund or account, the state expenditure limit committee, acting pursuant to RCW 43.135.025(5), shall lower the state expenditure limit to reflect the shift. For the purposes of this section, a transfer of money from the state general fund to another fund or account includes any state legislative action taken that has the effect of reducing revenues from a particular source, where such revenues would otherwise be deposited into the state general fund, while increasing the revenues from that particular source to another state or local government account. This subsection does not apply to: (a) The dedication or use of lottery revenues under RCW 67.70.240(3), in support of education or education expenditures; or (b) a transfer of moneys to, or an expenditure from, the budget stabilization account.

(5) If the cost of any state program or function and the ongoing revenue necessary to fund the program or function are shifted to the state general fund on or after January 1, 2007, the state expenditure limit committee, acting pursuant to RCW 43.135.025(5), shall increase the state expenditure limit to reflect the shift unless the shifted revenue had previously been shifted from the general fund.

(6) For the purposes of this chapter, "raises taxes" means any action or combination of actions by the legislature that increases state tax revenue deposited in any fund, budget, or account, regardless of whether the revenues are deposited into the general fund.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.135.035 (Tax legislation--Referral to voters--Conditions and restrictions--Ballot title--Declarations of emergency--Taxes on intangible property--Expenditure limit to reflect program cost shifting or fund transfer) and 2009 c 479 s 36 are each repealed.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS BY REQUIRING EITHER TWO-THIRDS LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OR VOTER APPROVAL FOR STATE GOVERNMENT TO RAISE TAXES

(section 4 takes effect if the 2010 legislature does not suspend or repeal the two-thirds legislative vote requirement for tax increases)

Sec. 4. RCW 43.135.035 and 2009 c 479 s 36 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) After July 1, 1995, any action or combination of actions by the legislature that raises taxes may be taken only if approved by ((a)) at least two-thirds ((~~vote of each house of the legislature~~)) legislative approval in both the house of representatives and the senate, and then only if state expenditures in any fiscal year, including the new revenue, will not exceed the state expenditure limits established under this chapter. Pursuant to the referendum power set forth in Article II, section 1(b) of the state Constitution, tax increases may be referred to the voters for their approval or rejection at an election.

(2)(a) If the legislative action under subsection (1) of this section will result in expenditures in excess of the state expenditure limit, then the action of the legislature shall not take effect until approved by a vote of the people at a November general election. The state expenditure limit committee shall adjust the state expenditure limit by the amount of additional revenue approved by the voters under this section. This adjustment shall not exceed the amount of revenue generated by the legislative action during the first full fiscal year in which it is in effect. The state expenditure limit shall be adjusted downward upon expiration or repeal of the legislative action.

(b) The ballot title for any vote of the people required under this section shall be substantially as follows:

"Shall taxes be imposed on . . . . . in order to allow a spending increase above last year's authorized spending adjusted for personal income growth?"

(3)(a) The state expenditure limit may be exceeded upon declaration of an emergency for a period not to exceed twenty-four months by a law approved by a two-thirds vote of each house of the legislature and signed by the governor. The law shall set forth the nature of the emergency, which is limited to natural disasters that require immediate government action to alleviate human suffering and provide humanitarian assistance. The state expenditure limit may be exceeded for no more than twenty-four months following the declaration of the emergency and only for the purposes contained in the emergency declaration.

(b) Additional taxes required for an emergency under this section may be imposed only until thirty days following the next general election, unless an extension is approved at that general election. The additional taxes shall expire upon expiration of the declaration of emergency. The legislature shall not impose additional taxes for emergency purposes under this subsection unless funds in the education construction fund have been exhausted.

(c) The state or any political subdivision of the state shall not impose any tax on intangible property listed in RCW 84.36.070 as that statute exists on January 1, 1993.

(4) If the cost of any state program or function is shifted from the state general fund to another source of funding, or if moneys are transferred from the state general fund to another fund or account, the state expenditure limit committee, acting pursuant to RCW 43.135.025(5), shall lower the state expenditure limit to reflect the shift. For the purposes of this section, a transfer of money from the state general fund to another fund or account includes any state legislative action taken that has the effect of reducing revenues from a particular source, where such revenues would otherwise be deposited into the state general fund, while increasing the revenues from that

particular source to another state or local government account. This subsection does not apply to: (a) The dedication or use of lottery revenues under RCW 67.70.240(3), in support of education or education expenditures; or (b) a transfer of moneys to, or an expenditure from, the budget stabilization account.

(5) If the cost of any state program or function and the ongoing revenue necessary to fund the program or function are shifted to the state general fund on or after January 1, 2007, the state expenditure limit committee, acting pursuant to RCW 43.135.025(5), shall increase the state expenditure limit to reflect the shift unless the shifted revenue had previously been shifted from the general fund.

(6) For the purposes of this chapter ((~~1, Laws of 2008~~)), "raises taxes" means any action or combination of actions by the legislature that increases state tax revenue deposited in any fund, budget, or account, regardless of whether the revenues are deposited into the general fund.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS BY REQUIRING MAJORITY LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL FOR STATE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE FEES

Sec. 5. RCW 43.135.055 and 2008 c 1 s 14 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ((~~No~~)) A fee may only be imposed or increased in any fiscal year ((~~without prior legislative approval~~)) if approved with majority legislative approval in both the house of representatives and the senate and must be subject to the accountability procedures required by RCW 43.135.031.

(2) This section does not apply to an assessment made by an agricultural commodity commission or board created by state statute or created under a marketing agreement or order under chapter 15.65 or 15.66 RCW, or to the forest products commission, if the assessment is approved by referendum in accordance with the provisions of the statutes creating the commission or board or chapter 15.65 or 15.66 RCW for approving such assessments.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS BY REQUIRING AN ADVISORY VOTE ON TAX INCREASES WHEN THE LEGISLATURE BLOCKS A PUBLIC VOTE BY USING AN EMERGENCY CLAUSE

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 43.135 RCW to read as follows:

If, after January 1, 2010, the legislature raises taxes as defined by this chapter and blocks the tax increase from a public vote by using an emergency clause, a measure for an advisory vote of the people as provided in RCW 29A.72.040 is required and shall be placed on the next general election ballot. If the legislature takes away the citizens' right to referendum, guaranteed by our state Constitution, and the people are blocked from casting a binding vote on a tax increase, then they must be allowed to cast at least an advisory vote on it.

CONSTRUCTION CLAUSE

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act. The requirements of this act are in addition to, and do not supercede, any other existing provision of law that is more restrictive upon the legislature's ability to raise taxes than the requirements of this act.

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

MISCELLANEOUS

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** This act shall be known and cited as Save The 2/3's Vote For Tax Increases Act of 2010.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 2 and 3 of this act take effect if, during the 2010 legislative session, the legislature amends or repeals RCW 43.135.035.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** Section 4 of this act takes effect if, during the 2010 legislative session, the legislature does not amend or repeal RCW 43.135.035.

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