

INITIATIVE 279

I, Sam Reed, Secretary of State of the State of Washington and custodian of its seal, hereby certify that, according to the records on file in my office, the attached copy of Initiative Measure No. 279 to the Legislature is a true and correct copy as it was received by this office.

AN ACT Relating to limiting property taxes; adding a section to chapter 84.55 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

POLICIES AND PURPOSES

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The 25% Property Tax Initiative would reduce property taxes 25% for everyone by phasing out the state portion of the property tax. This measure would reduce the state property tax levy by 25% in 2003, 50% in 2004, 75% in 2005, and 100% in 2006 and every year thereafter. For decades, property taxes have skyrocketed in Washington. Rising property taxes have placed an incredible financial burden on taxpayers, especially working class families and senior citizens. Sky-high property taxes prevent many of our citizens from attaining the American dream of home ownership. Meaningful property tax relief is long-overdue and desperately needed. Every year, government grows several billion dollars. So by phasing in the 25% Property Tax Initiative over a reasonable and moderate four-year period, government will continue to grow but simply at a slower rate. Besides, because of huge property tax spikes in recent years, for many

property owners, this measure will only put property taxes at the same level they were two or three years ago. But we have to start somewhere. During these tough economic times, struggling families and senior citizens desperately need and deserve meaningful property tax relief.

**PHASING IN THE 25% PROPERTY TAX INITIATIVE
OVER A REASONABLE AND MODERATE FOUR-YEAR PERIOD**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 84.55 RCW to read as follows:

- (1) The state property tax levy shall be reduced by the following amounts:
 - (a) 25.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section for taxes levied for collection in 2003;
 - (b) 50.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section for taxes levied for collection in 2004;
 - (c) 75.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section for taxes levied for collection in 2005;
 - (d) 25.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section for taxes levied for collection in 2006 and every year thereafter.
- (2) Before applying the reduction in the state property tax levy required by this section, levies shall be set every year at the amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to the prior years' reductions provided for in this section.

CONSTRUCTION CLAUSE

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the policies and purposes of this act.

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any provision of this act of 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.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The people have made clear through the passage of numerous initiatives and referenda that taxes need to be reasonable and tax increases should always be a last resort. However, politicians throughout the state of Washington continue to ignore these repeated mandates.

Politicians are reminded:

- 1) All political power is vested in the people, as stated in Article I, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.
- 2) The first power reserved by the people is the initiative, as stated in Article II, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.
- 3) When voters approve initiatives, politicians have a moral, ethical and constitutional obligation to fully implement them. When politicians ignore this obligation, they corrupt the term "public servant."
- 4) Any attempt to violate the clear intent and spirit of this measure undermines the trust of the people in their government and will increase the likelihood of future tax limitation measures.

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