

The text of this document is an accurate copy of what was filed by the initiative proponent with the Secretary of State for assignment of a serial number. The accuracy of code in amendatory sections has not been verified.

### INITIATIVE 855

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. 855 to the People is a true and correct copy as it was received by this office.

AN ACT Relating to property tax levies; adding a section to chapter 84.55 RCW; amending RCW 84.55.0101 and 84.55.050; repealing RCW 84.55.092; and creating new sections.

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

### LEGISLATIVE INTENT

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The 25% Property Tax Initiative is intended to decrease the property tax burden in Washington by changing laws relating to property tax levies. It is long overdue. This measure would reduce the state property tax levy by 25%, effective in 2004, and would prohibit regular property tax levy increases unless voters approve of an increase at an election. 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. During these tough economic times, struggling families and senior

citizens desperately need and deserve meaningful property tax relief. Because of huge property tax spikes in recent years, for many property owners, the reduction in the state property tax levy will only put property taxes at the same level they were two or three years ago. But we have to start somewhere. By prohibiting governments from increasing property taxes unless voters approve them will decrease the property tax burden because voters are less likely to approve of increases than are their elected representatives. This measure also decreases the property tax burden by ensuring that increases be for a limited duration which encourages governments to use existing revenues more effectively rather than constantly increasing the property tax burden. The people recognize that even with this measure, because of economic growth, overall government revenues will continue to grow but simply at a slower rate. The crushing property tax burden on taxpayers must be lessened and the 25% Property Tax Initiative accomplishes that worthy goal.

**DECREASING THE PROPERTY TAX BURDEN BY  
REDUCING THE STATE PROPERTY TAX LEVY BY 25%**

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

(1) The state property tax levy for collection in 2004 and all years thereafter shall be reduced by 25.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section.

(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.

**DECREASING THE PROPERTY TAX BURDEN BY  
PROHIBITING REGULAR PROPERTY TAX LEVY INCREASES  
UNLESS VOTERS APPROVE OF AN INCREASE AT AN ELECTION**

**Sec. 3.** RCW 84.55.0101 and 2002 c 1 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

Upon a finding of substantial need, the legislative authority of a taxing district other than the state may provide for the use of a limit factor under this chapter of one hundred (({- one -})) percent or less unless an increase greater than this limit is approved by the voters at

an election as provided in RCW 84.55.050. In districts with legislative authorities of four members or less, two-thirds of the members must approve an ordinance or resolution under this section. In districts with more than four members, a majority plus one vote must approve an ordinance or resolution under this section. The new limit factor shall be effective for taxes collected in the following year only.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** RCW 84.55.092 (Protection of future levy capacity) and 1998 c 16 s 3; 1988 c 274 s 4; 1986 c 107 s 3 are each repealed.

#### **CONSTRUCTION CLAUSE**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the policies, purposes, and intent of this act.

#### **SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** 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.

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