

Monday, October 22nd, 2012

To: Our thousands of supporters throughout the state (cc'd to the media, house & senate members, and Governor)

From: Tim Eyman, Jack Fagan, & Mike Fagan, initiative co-sponsors, ph: [425-493-9127](tel:425-493-9127), email: tim_eyman@comcast.net

RE: Eyman gives closing argument for I-1185 in Sunday's Seattle Times

Couldn't have said it better myself:

Op-ed:

Make it tougher for state Legislature to raise taxes, approve Initiative 1185

Without the two-thirds vote requirement for the Legislature to raise taxes, lawmakers will impose higher taxes on regular taxpayers who are ill-equipped to fight back, writes guest columnist Tim Eyman.

By Tim Eyman, Special to The Seattle Times, Sunday, October 21, 2012,
http://seattletimes.com/html/opinion/2019476598_timeymanopedxml.html



WE'VE had 20 years of experience with initiatives like this year's Initiative 1185, the Taxpayer Protection Act, which makes it tougher for Olympia to raise your taxes.

Whether you are a Republican, Democrat or Independent voter, can't we all agree that it's better to spur state government to prioritize spending and reform government rather than just raising your taxes? Olympia has proved time and again that if it's easy to raise your taxes, they will. And lawmakers have consistently illustrated that without these tougher-to-raise-taxes policies, they'll impose higher taxes on regular taxpayers who are ill-equipped to fight back.

Olympia politicians may talk a lot about "closing corporate loopholes" and "forcing the rich to pay their fair share" but whenever taxes are increased, powerful lobbyists protect their clients and you and I get stuck with higher sales taxes, property taxes, car-tab taxes, candy taxes, cigarette taxes, liquor taxes, beer taxes, utility taxes and gas taxes.

The two-thirds vote requirement for the Legislature to raise taxes has been approved by voters four times — Initiative 1185 is the voters' fifth opportunity. There has been a 20-year tug of war over this policy, voters repeatedly approving it and legislators repeatedly suspending it after a couple of years.

During legislative sessions it has been in effect; it has done exactly what the voters wanted, making tax increases a last resort and forcing elected officials to work together to prioritize spending and reform government.

But during sessions where the Legislature has suspended it, it's only been a debate about which taxes to increase, how much to increase them, and which poor and working-class taxpayers get targeted. Two decades of experience clearly show that the Legislature cannot be trusted to make tax increases a last resort without the two-thirds vote requirement.

Recent history is instructive. Gov. Chris Gregoire, when she was a candidate, repeatedly gave us her word in 2004 not to raise taxes. "To go out and tax people at a time when we're just trying to get ourselves out of a recession, to me, is the wrong direction for the state." She immediately broke her promise after becoming governor.

The voters responded in 2007 by approving Initiative 960, which required two-thirds legislative approval or majority voter approval for tax increases, simple majority votes for fee increases (no delegating authority to state agencies), 10-year cost projections and email alerts on tax bills, and tax advisory votes when Olympia unilaterally raises taxes without a vote of the people. This policy deters the Legislature from slapping an emergency clause on tax-increase bills that prevent citizens from challenging them by referendum.

Thanks to the voters approving I-960 in 2007, tax increases were a last resort in 2008 and 2009.

But in September of 2009, union leaders threatened to withhold 2010 campaign donations from Democratic lawmakers unless they suspended I-960 and raised taxes ("State Democrats Facing Revolt By Labor," Seattle Times, Nov. 11, 2009).

Despite her 2008 re-election promises not to raise taxes ("I won't raise taxes in tough economic times. We're not going to be raising taxes.") Gregoire quickly capitulated.

House Speaker Frank Chopp and Senate Leader Lisa Brown were only too eager to agree. ("We have to get 960 overturned as soon as possible," Brown said.) The first thing the 2010 Legislature did was suspend I-960; it was the first bill Gregoire signed into law.

Without I-960's protections, the Legislature went hog wild, proposing billions in tax hikes. Despite Democrats' huge majorities in the House and Senate, lobbyists for the powerful stopped the closing of tax loopholes and higher taxes on the rich, the kinds of taxes Democrats claimed they'd increase if it wasn't for I-960. Instead, the Legislature's \$6.7 billion in tax hikes were imposed on Joe Sixpack — higher taxes on soda pop, bottled water, beer, cigarettes and food.

So the citizens — consciously, thoughtfully, intelligently — passed Initiative 1053 with 64 percent of the vote in 2010. They also voted out of office nine Democrat legislators because of their betrayal of the public trust by taking away I-960 protections.

After voters rejected a state income tax and 2 cents on a can of pop and approved I-1053, Gregoire said three strikes you're out: "You can't deny the voice of the people, they have said no new revenue" and "I know they don't want taxes. I get that."

Nonetheless, the backsliding started almost immediately with Gregoire saying, "I have to assume people did not understand the ramifications" and "I'm not gonna let 1053 stand in the way of me moving forward for what I think is right."

This illustrates the need for Initiative 1185's extension of I-960's protections. Without them, the governor and Legislature in 2013 will do exactly what they did in 2010: suspend these policies and go on a tax-hiking rampage. And with tax increases as a first resort, bills prioritizing spending and reforming government will be shelved.

There's no decision that government makes that has a bigger impact on our lives than taking more of the people's money. It should be done only as a last resort and with transparency, citizen input and public feedback. I-1185 ensures that will happen.

As for the state Supreme Court, just two years ago they unanimously rejected a lawsuit just like the current one, so the decision on this issue will be made by the citizens. We, the people, will have the final word.

And that's the way it's supposed to be. Article I, Section 1 of our state constitution reads: "All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The founders of our state and authors of our constitution — people who were deeply committed to limiting the power of government — would not be troubled by the taxpayer protections in I-601, R-49, I-960, I-1053 and I-1185.

We must never forget that our constitution exists to protect the people from the government, not to protect the government from the people.

Protect yourself by extending Initiative 960's protections with Initiative 1185. Vote yes.

Tim Eyman co-sponsored Initiative 1185. For more information, www.VotersWantMoreChoices.com.

-- END --

Thanks to you, the voters have the chance to approve I-1185. We really appreciate your help in getting it on the ballot. But we ask that you not forget about us. We only earn what our supporters are willing to give. Our compensation comes from your voluntary contributions.

Jack, Mike, and I are extremely grateful for the folks who contribute to our compensation fund. We ask that you continue that support. If you like and appreciate our past, current, and future efforts on behalf of taxpayers, please send us a donation for \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1,000, \$2500, \$5000 or more (there are no limits on how much can be given). Please consider a monthly pledge from now through December for our fund. We ask you to please help us help taxpayers. You can go to our website -- www.VotersWantMoreChoices.com and make a secure on-line contribution by PayPal or VISA or MasterCard. OR, you can print [this form](#), fill it out, and return it with a check or credit card information. Your voluntary contribution to our compensation fund will be divided between the three of us and compensate us for our political work.

Congratulations again on I-1185. As for our compensation fund, we would be extremely grateful for any financial assistance you can offer. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Tim Eyman, Jack Fagan, & Mike Fagan

Fighting for Taxpayers for 15 Years,

425-493-9127 tim_eyman@comcast.net

P.S. There are thousands of politicians, bureaucrats, lobbyists, and special interest groups working each and every day to raise your taxes. Shouldn't there be at least one person, one team, one organization that fights to lower your taxes? Please [help us](#) so we can continue our successful efforts on behalf of taxpayers.

Each year, from January through June, we ask that you focus your donations toward the signature gathering campaign - this year, thanks to your help, we succeeded at qualifying I-1185 for the ballot.

Each year, from July through December, we ask that you focus your contributions toward "Help Us Help Taxpayers", the compensation fund for Jack, Mike, and Tim.

Now that I-1185 is assured a place on the November ballot, we ask that each and every one of you send in your most generous contribution so we can continue our fight on behalf of taxpayers.

Guys, thanks for I-1185 -- I really appreciate what you're doing -- keep fighting for us. Please accept my contribution for \$ _____

Please supply the information below so we can send you a thank you letter (it's really important to fill this out).

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ Made payable to "Help Us Help Taxpayers"

VISA or M/C number _____ Exp. date (MM/YY) ____/____

Amt. \$ _____

CRITICAL: Email address (please print clearly) _____

Occupation _____

Employer & Employer zip code _____

Voluntary donations to "Help Us Help Taxpayers" are not tax-deductible. Voluntary donations to "Help Us Help Taxpayers" are political donations that will be used to compensate Tim Eyman, Jack Fagan, & Mike Fagan for their effective political work on behalf of taxpayers.

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