



City of Seattle Initiative Measure No. 88

Ballot Title

Seattle Initiative Measure No. 88 concerns tax levies to fund the Seattle School District's educational programs.

If enacted, this measure would allow increased property taxes to be collected in 2008 through 2013 to provide funding for educational programs of the Seattle School District. It would lift the RCW 84.55 limit on regular property taxes so that the total regular tax limit for collection in 2008 would be \$3.27/\$1,000 assessed value. Each year from 2009 through 2013, the additional regular property taxes that could be collected would increase at the same rate as the consumer price index.

Should this levy lid lift be approved?

Yes.....

No.....

Statement For

A great city deserves great schools. That's why Seattle parents, teachers, civic leaders, arts and music supporters and other advocates for Seattle's public schools are voting YES for Initiative 88.

Initiative 88 helps invest in Seattle's kids by: Restoring funds for arts, music and enrichment programs; reducing class sizes; providing all-day kindergarten for all students; and putting money directly into schools so all students receive the resources and help they need to succeed.

Initiative 88 helps restore arts, music and enrichment programs for our students. These are the programs that broaden education and enrich our children's lives. For years, these were some of the most popular school programs with kids and parents. It's time to restore them to our curriculum.

Initiative 88 helps reduce class sizes in every school. This means teachers can give students the personal attention they deserve.

Initiative 88 helps provide all-day kindergarten for all families. The evidence is overwhelming. Kids who start school ready to learn do better in life than kids who don't get that early support.

Initiative 88 helps ensure the money goes straight into the classrooms, so students get the resources they need. Initiative 88 funds cannot be used to balance the District's budget.

Initiative 88 has strong support from those who best know our Seattle Public Schools; teachers, school support employees and parents. The Seattle Education Association, Schools First, the King County Labor Council and the Seattle School Board support I-88.

Initiative 88 lifts the city's property tax lid for six years and allows the city to collect an additional 39 cents per thousand assessed value. Initiative 87, which we expect will be on the Nov. 7 general election ballot, authorizes the additional money to be collected and directed to Seattle Public Schools for the specific purposes listed above. It will raise

City Attorney's Explanatory Statement

The proposal:

Initiative 88 asks Seattle voters to authorize an increase in the regular property taxes that the City could levy for a six-year period beginning in 2007. The additional money authorized by this initiative could be used only for certain educational purposes.

The law as it currently exists:

State law limits the regular property taxes that the City of Seattle may levy in any given year without voter approval. This limit is called the "levy lid."

Under State law, the levy lid is determined by first multiplying a "limit factor" set in State law by the highest yearly amount of regular property taxes the City had levied during the past three years, and then adding to that an amount

about \$40 million a year for student programs. Both initiatives are temporary and will expire after six years. Voters must approve both measures.

Voters demand and deserve accountability for their tax dollars, and that's exactly what I-88 and I-87 give them – a clear commitment to investing in smaller class sizes, restoring arts and music and providing all-day kindergarten.

Seattle voters have proved their support for their public schools many times before, and the Great Schools initiatives will give them a chance to once again show their support for our city's children.

Vote YES on Initiative 88!

Rebuttal of Statement Against

It's disappointing but not surprising that downtown politicians oppose Initiative 88. Their priorities are sports stadiums and roads, not our city's children.

I-88 is a neighborhood solution that will improve student achievement and ensure all Seattle public school students receive a well-rounded education.

I-88 helps fund programs that benefit kids: Arts and music. Smaller class sizes. All-day kindergarten.

I-88 is endorsed by parents, teachers, PTAs and other public school supporters.

I-88 money will benefit students, not bureaucracy. It's a temporary solution that expires after six years. The Seattle School Board has a separate plan for cutting waste and balancing the district's budget. The state is failing to adequately fund education, but I-88 opponents have failed to offer solutions.

For about \$150 a year on a \$400,000 home, I-88 will restore arts and music, reduce class sizes and fund all-day kindergarten. Support Seattle's children. Vote YES on I-88.

STATEMENTS PREPARED BY: Peter Steinbrueck, Parent & Seattle City Council Member; Cheryl Chow, Seattle School Board Director; Wendy Kimball, Seattle Public Schools Librarian & Seattle Education Association President



City Attorney's Explanatory Statement (cont.)

that accounts for new construction, property improvements, and increases in the assessed value of State-assessed property in the City.

No increase in regular property taxes beyond the levy lid can be made without approval from the City's voters. Voter approval of such a tax increase is called a "levy lid lift."

The effect of this measure if approved:

In general

Initiative 88 is a levy lid lift measure that would apply to regular property taxes assessed during 2007 through 2012 for collection during 2008 through 2013.

If voters approve I-88, the City could – but would not be required to – increase its regular property taxes during this period above the levy lid, up to the limit stated in I-88. However, this tax increase could be used only for certain educational purposes.

Statement Against

Dear Voters:

We are Seattle Mayors, current and former, who care deeply about education. If educational excellence is your highest priority, like it is for the three of us, then **vote NO** on I-88. Why? I-88 is **financially irresponsible**, ignores the **state's duty** to fully fund education, and is **inequitable** for children.

I-88 is Financially Irresponsible

The Seattle School District already has huge financial problems, and cannot even pay for current services. It is on the path to bankruptcy. They project a deficit mounting to **\$141 million** in five years. The most amazing part is, none of the money raised by I-88 can be used to pay for the District's budget deficit – it just adds new costs. Instead of fixing its problems, I-88 would make the deficit even bigger – more than **\$180 million. I-88 won't reduce the District's deficit by even one dollar.** This is the opposite of good financial management.

Education Funding is the State's Job

We all care about education, but it is the state's job to fund it, according to the State Constitution. This initiative asks Seattle homeowners to pay more, instead of asking the state to fulfill its duty. Governor Gregoire's state task force, Washington Learns, is about to make recommendations on education funding across the state. Voting for this initiative will send a message to the state that we don't need more money and will hurt our chances of getting more.

I-88 Destroys Educational Equity and Social Justice Laws

If you care about low-income children having equal access to education no matter where they live, then you should oppose I-88. It creates a loophole in the state law for the Seattle School District to tax homeowners more than other districts can tax. This goes against the spirit of our state's strict education funding laws that make sure all children have the same access to quality education.

Amount and duration of lid lift

I-88 would lift the lid on regular property taxes that could be levied by the City in 2007 (for 2008 collection) so that the total regular property tax lid for that year would be \$3.27 for each \$1,000 of assessed value; the amount of money this lid lift could raise would depend on what the regular property tax lid would have been without I-88. Additional regular property taxes levied in each year from 2008 through 2012 could increase at the same rate as the consumer price index for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton area.

The levy lid lift authorized by I-88 would not apply to regular property taxes levied after 2012. For the levy in 2013 (for 2014 collection) and subsequent years, the maximum tax levy would be determined as if the lid lift authorized by I-88 had not occurred.

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The City of Seattle has already shown a strong commitment to education through its \$117 million Families and Education Levy, approved by voters three times. Seattle is the only city in the nation to support its schools in this way. Voters just increased the amount of this levy by 70% in 2004, and it will last for five more years. We support this existing tax, but strongly oppose I-88. It is just too much.

This initiative is the wrong way to fund education. Vote NO.

Rebuttal of Statement For

Please read the proponent's statement carefully where they admit, **"I-88 can't be used to balance the district's budget."** That means Seattle Schools' \$20 million dollar annual deficit will go unsolved by I-88 and will grow in the future.

The services described by proponents are all things we want for our kids but the School Superintendent's own Blue Ribbon Task Force strongly recommended the Seattle School Board cut unnecessary administration and transportation expenses first. The School Board has not stepped up to the hard work to balance the budget. Seattle taxpayers should not bail out the School Board or pick up the education tab for the State legislature.

We all want what's best for education, but let's not divert Seattle taxes that go for police, fire, libraries, parks and transportation to do it.

Vote no on I-88.

STATEMENTS PREPARED BY: Mayor Greg Nickels, Former Mayor Norman B. Rice, Former Mayor Charles Royer



City of Seattle Initiative Measure No. 88

City Attorney's Explanatory Statement (cont.)

Purposes for which additional tax revenue could be used

I-88 states that the additional tax money that it authorizes may be used only for the educational purposes set out in another proposed initiative, referred to in I-88 as "the Great Schools Educational Funding Initiative" (the other initiative, known as Initiative 87, will not appear on the September 2006 ballot). I-87 specifies that each year, an amount of money at least equal to the additional tax money authorized if voters approve the lid lift in I-88 must be provided by the City to the Seattle School District, which would have to use it as follows:

(a) 75 percent for the following three purposes:

- To restore a comprehensive arts, drama and music program and library programs in schools; including the restoration of instrumental music at middle and elementary schools.
- To reduce class size or pupil-teacher ratios in elementary schools, and in core classes at secondary schools.
- To provide tuition-free all-day kindergarten for all children enrolled in the Seattle School District.

(b) 20 percent for the following three purposes:

- To allow lengthened school days or school years, or to further reduce class size or pupil-teacher ratios for students who need additional in-class support to graduate on time and to meet state and district standards.
- To provide time for school staff to meet and focus on curriculum or teaching strategies.
- To provide other school-based support, such as nurses, counselors or social workers.

(c) 5 percent to support classrooms, purchase teaching materials, support new teachers, and support custodial and maintenance needs for increased operational hours and space utilization.

Money provided by the City under I-87 could not be used to supplant then-existing City support of students and schools. I-87 funds also could not be used to supplant then-existing state, federal and levy-funded expenditures of the Seattle School District.

Text of Initiative Measure No. 88

Property Tax Levy Lid Lift to Support Great Schools

WHEREAS an educated citizenry is essential to the continued prosperity and welfare of the City of Seattle; and

WHEREAS an urgent need exists to establish the long-term fiscal viability of the Seattle School System to accelerate student achievement for all of its diverse student populations;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Findings

a. Providing City services, including the educational programs described in this initiative, is a City purpose.

b. An urgent need exists to continue the provision of City services, including the educational services funded with regular property taxes, and its urgency requires submission to the qualified electors of the City of Seattle of a measure authorizing regular property tax levies in excess of the limitations in RCW Chapter 84.55, as it now exists or may hereafter be amended, for up to six years, at a special election to be held in conjunction with a general election or primary.

Section 2. Definitions. As used in this measure, the following words when capitalized have the following meanings:

a. "City" means City of Seattle.

b. "People" means the people of the City of Seattle.

Section 3. Lift of Levy Lids for Regular Property Taxes – Authority

The People have vested the legislative powers of the City in a Mayor and City Council, but the People have reserved to themselves independent of the Mayor and the City Council the power to propose for themselves measures dealing with any matter within the realm of local affairs or municipal business. That power includes the use of an initiative petition to submit to the qualified electors of the City a measure as authorized by RCW 84.55.050 to exceed the limitations of regular property taxes contained in RCW Chapter 84.55, as it now exists or may hereinafter be amended.

Section 4. Lift of Levy Lids for Regular Property Taxes – Amount

The limitations on regular property taxes contained in Chapter 84.55 RCW, as it now exists or may hereafter be amended, for property taxes levied in 2007 through 2012, for collection in 2008 through 2013, respectively. For taxes levied in 2007 for collection in 2008 the tax rate shall be limited to \$ 3.27 per \$1,000 assessed value. For taxes levied in 2008 through 2012, that portion of the levy to be used for the purposes described herein may increase annually by the Consumer Price Index ("CPI")-U for Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton. Pursuant to RCW 84.55.050(4), the maximum regular property taxes that may be levied in 2013 for collection in 2014 and later years shall be computed as if the levy lid in RCW 84.55.010 had not been lifted under this initiative.

The limitations on regular property taxes shall be lifted only for the educational purposes set forth in the Great Schools Educational Funding Initiative enacted by the City or submitted to the voters contemporaneously with this measure.



Section 5. Election - Ballot Title

The Ballot Title for this measure shall be as follows or as modified by the City Attorney pursuant to RCW 29A.36.070:

This measure approves for up to six (6) years, regular property taxes higher than the limits of Chapter 84.55 RCW for educational purposes only. For taxes levied in 2007, for collection in 2008, the regular levy rate shall be limited to \$ 3.27 per \$1,000 assessed value. Tax levies for 2008 through 2012 may increase annually by the Consumer Price Index ("CPI")-U for Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton. For taxes levied in 2013 and later years, the maximum tax levy shall be computed as if the levy lid had not been lifted by this measure.

Section 6. Severability

In the event that any one or more of the provisions of this ordinance shall for any reason be held to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of this ordinance or the levy of the taxes authorized herein but this ordinance and the authority to levy those taxes shall be construed and enforced as if such invalid provisions had not been contained herein; and any provision which shall for any reason be held by reason of its extent to be invalid shall be deemed to be in effect to the extent permitted by law.

Section 7. Effective Date

This measure shall be effective upon proclamation of the Mayor within five (5) days after the election at which it is approved by the People.

Text of Resolution Placing I-88 on the Ballot

A RESOLUTION regarding Initiative No. 88; requesting that the King County Division of Records and Elections call a special municipal election to coincide with the primary election to be held on September 19, 2006 and place Initiative No. 88 before the qualified electors of the City of Seattle on the September 2006 ballot.

WHEREAS, proponents submitted to the Office of the City Clerk a ballot measure petition regarding a proposed property tax levy lid lift (which the City Clerk designated as Initiative No. 88 in Clerk File No. 307964); and,

WHEREAS, proponents also submitted to the Office of the City Clerk another ballot measure petition providing that the City provide to the School District additional funding for educational programs in an amount that is not less than the additional regular property tax levy amount authorized by the levy lid lift (which the City Clerk designated as Initiative No. 87 in Clerk File No. 307973); and,

WHEREAS, the Office of the City Clerk forwarded both

petitions to the King County Division of Records and Elections for certification whether either or both petitions bear a sufficient number of valid signatures to qualify for introduction to the City Council as provided in City Charter Article IV, Section 1; and,

WHEREAS, King County Division of Records and Elections has certified that Initiative No. 88 petitions bore sufficient valid signatures to qualify for introduction to the City Council as provided in Seattle City Charter, Article IV; and,

WHEREAS, Initiative No. 88, as a proposed levy lid lift, must be approved by the qualified electors of the City of Seattle in order to take effect; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle filed a Declaratory Judgment action in King County Superior Court requesting a declaration that Initiative No. 87 exceeds the scope of the initiative power and is inconsistent with the state budget laws for first class cities; and,

WHEREAS, the City does not expect a decision from the Superior Court regarding Initiative No. 87 until at least August 25, 2006;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City requests, in the form of this resolution, that King County call a special municipal election to coincide with the September 2006 primary election and place Initiative No. 88 before the qualified electors of the City of Seattle on the September 2006 ballot.

Section 2. The City Clerk is authorized and directed to take those actions necessary to place Initiative No. 88 before the voters at the September 2006 election.

Section 3. The City Attorney has prepared the following ballot title for Initiative No. 88. The City Clerk is authorized to transmit this ballot title to the King County Division of Records and Elections.

Seattle Initiative Measure No. 88 concerns tax levies to fund the Seattle School District's educational programs.

If enacted, this measure would allow increased property taxes to be collected in 2008 through 2013 to provide funding for educational programs of the Seattle School District. It would lift the RCW 84.55 limit on regular property taxes so that the total regular tax limit for collection in 2008 would be \$3.27/\$1,000 assessed value. Each year from 2009 through 2013, the additional regular property taxes that could be collected would increase at the same rate as the consumer price index.

Section 4. The Executive Director of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission is authorized and directed to take those actions necessary to place information regarding Initiative No. 88 in the September 2006 voters' pamphlet.

Section 5. Actions taken prior to the adoption of this resolution that are consistent with it are hereby ratified and confirmed.