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No-bail amendment wins in landslide

By Sanjay Bhatt
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The no-bail constitutional amendment allowing judges to deny bail to people charged with certain violent crimes won Tuesday with overwhelming support.

Initiative 1082, a hotly contested measure to privatize the state workers' compensation system, failed with about 42 percent support.

Referendum 52, an extension to the bottled-water tax to pay for energy-efficiency projects, also failed with 43 percent of the vote, with more than half the votes counted.



Here's a breakdown on each ballot measure:

No-bail amendment

The no-bail amendment won with a decisive vote topping 85 percent.

Officially called Engrossed Substitute House Joint Resolution 4220, it allows a judge to deny bail to persons charged with an offense punishable by life in prison. These include a third-strike felony, rape of a child, murder or other serious crimes.

Before denying bail, a judge also must find clear and convincing evidence the defendant has a propensity for violence and poses a likely danger to the public.

The no-bail amendment was proposed by lawmakers in direct response to last year's killing of four Lakewood police officers.

Maurice Clemmons, a felon facing life in prison on four felony charges, was bailed out of the Pierce County Jail on Nov. 23. Six days later, he shot Sgt. Mark Renninger and Officers Ronald Owens, Tina Griswold and Greg Richards.

The memory of that nearly year-old tragedy was fresh in voters' minds, even though the amendment's supporters only spent modest amounts on advertising just before the election, said Rep. Mike Hope, R-Lake

Stevens, a veteran Seattle police officer who helped initiate the amendment.

"I think the measure speaks for itself," Hope said. "People want to feel protected. They want to feel some sense of security."

Workers' comp

Among the six state initiatives, I-1082 got the fewest votes overall, suggesting some voters didn't feel strongly about it.

The initiative would have allowed employers to buy workers' compensation insurance from private insurers by July 2012. Workers' compensation covers injured workers for lost wages, medical treatment and vocational rehabilitation.

Campaigns for I-1082 raised more than \$3.3 million, led by the construction industry, private insurers and Boeing.

"Obviously these results are disappointing," said Kris Tefft, general counsel for the Association of Washington Business, which backed the initiative.

Opposition to I-1082, led by trial lawyers and trade unions, raised \$5.4 million.

"It was a tough, long campaign, but we stuck to our message, which was 'Read the fine print,' " said Alex Fryer, a spokesman for the No on I-1082 campaign.

Referendum 52

Referendum 52 would have authorized the state to issue \$505 million in bonds to finance energy-efficiency projects at schools and colleges, and extended the sales tax on bottled water past 2013 to pay off the debt.

Supporters included Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Climate Solutions board co-president Jabe Blumenthal and Dean Allen, CEO of McKinstry, a Seattle energy-efficiency company. Though the measure was leading in King County, it failed statewide.

"It was hard to get our educational message out among all the negative stuff that was out there," said Rep. Hans Dunshee, D-Snohomish, who sponsored the bill that put Referendum 52 on the ballot.

This report includes information from Seattle Times archives.

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