

Initiative Measure No. 46

BALLOT TITLE

"AN ACT providing for a current state school fund sufficient to produce \$30.00 for each child of school age; for the distribution of state and county school funds to school districts upon the equal basis of attendance and teachers employed; and fixing the maximum annual tax levy of school districts, except for bonded indebtedness, at 1.7 per cent of the assessed value of the taxable property thereof."

AN ACT relating to the collection and distribution of state and county school funds, fixing length of school year, amending sections 5066, 5068, 5076, 5103 and 5105 of Pierce's Washington Code, and repealing certain laws.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Washington:

SECTION 1. That section 5103 of Pierce's Washington Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 5103. The interest accruing on said permanent school fund, together with all rentals and other revenues derived therefrom, and from lands and other property devoted to the common school fund, shall be exclusively applied to the current use of the common schools. In addition thereto it shall be the duty of the State Board of Equalization, annually, at the time of levying taxes for state purposes, to levy a tax sufficient to produce a sum which, when added to the amount of money derived from interest and other income from the state permanent school fund during the preceding school year, shall equal thirty dollars for each child of school age residing in the state as shown by the last reports of the several county superintendents to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. School age, for the purpose of determining the amount of state and county levies, shall be from four to twenty-one years in school districts of the first and second classes and from five to twenty-one years in all other school districts. The fund provided

by this section shall be known as the current state school fund.

SEC. 2. That Section 5066 of Pierce's Washington Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 5066. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall apportion to the several counties of the state on or before the 20th day of July, October, January, April, May and June of each year such current state school funds as have been certified by the state auditor to be in the hands of the state and county treasurers, excepting only that before each such apportionment is made there may be deducted out of the portion of such fund in the hands of the state treasurer a sum not to exceed ten thousand dollars, as the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine to be necessary for the purpose of adjusting extreme inequalities among the school districts of the state. Said sum so deducted shall be used by said Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purpose aforesaid, under the supervision and direction of the State Board of Education.

SEC. 3. That section 5068 of Pierce's Washington Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 5068. At each apportionment of the current state school fund one-half of the fund available for such purpose shall be apportioned to each county upon the basis of the aggregate number of days of attendance of all of the pupils in the several districts of the county, to be de-

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terminated pursuant to the following provisions:

1. Calculations as to attendance shall be based upon the last annual reports of the several county superintendents filed in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

2. Any district of any class shall be entitled to be accredited with its actual attendance based upon a school year up to but not exceeding one hundred ninety school days in length: *Provided, however,* that no district after July 1, 1924, shall be accredited with any attendance whatsoever for attendance at any school which shall not have been maintained for a school year of at least one hundred sixty school days.

3. The attendance of pupils in high schools shall be counted as one and one-half times the actual attendance.

4. The attendance of pupils in parental schools where board and lodging are furnished the pupils shall be counted as three times the actual attendance.

5. The attendance of pupils in schools for defectives shall be counted as five times the actual attendance.

6. A day's attendance of not less than two hours of a pupil in a kindergarten authorized by the laws of this state shall be counted as a half day's attendance.

7. The attendance of a pupil at an evening or night school authorized by the laws of this state shall be counted as a half day's attendance without maximum age limit.

8. When the school board of any district is obliged to close a school by order of a board of health or of health officers, on account of the prevalence of any infectious or contagious disease, or, when it is impossible to maintain a school on account of any circumstances over which the school board has no control, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall allow such district its regular apportionment of funds for such period of time (in no event to exceed twenty school days in one school year) as said superintendent shall determine that such school was unavoidably closed. In determining such allowance the superintendent

shall compute the attendance during such period upon the basis of the average daily attendance in such school on those days of such school year as school was open.

SEC. 4. At each apportionment of the current state school fund one-half of the fund available for such purpose shall be apportioned to each county upon the basis of the number of teachers employed for a full year of at least nine months in the several districts of the county, subject to such regulations in regard to the number of teachers allowable to any district for purposes of apportionment as may be provided by the State Board of Education. Where a teacher is employed for less than nine months the county shall, subject to regulations provided as aforesaid, receive one-ninth of the amount of the apportionment for a full year's employment, for each month such teacher was actually employed; *Provided,* That no district after July 1, 1924, shall be accredited with the employment of any teacher whatsoever unless it shall have maintained school in such school year for at least one hundred sixty days. Calculations as to such employment shall be based upon the last annual reports of the several county superintendents filed in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SEC. 5. That section 5105 of Pierce's Washington Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 5105. The county commissioners of the several counties of the State of Washington shall annually, at the time of making the tax levy for county purposes, levy a tax on all property subject to taxation in their county, sufficient to produce the sum of ten dollars for each child of school age therein, as is shown by the certificate of the county superintendent hereinafter mentioned. The funds provided for by this section shall be known as the county school fund and shall be apportioned to the several districts in each county at the same time and in the same manner that the current state school fund is apportioned to such districts.

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SEC. 6. That section 5076 of Pierce's Washington Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 5076. It shall be the duty of the county superintendent within ten days after receiving the certificate of apportionment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to apportion such current state school fund and such county school fund as are subject to apportionment, to the several districts entitled to receive the same in accordance with the instructions of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. He shall certify the results of the apportionments to the county treasurer, and also notify each clerk of the amount apportioned to his district.

SEC. 7. No school district of this state shall, with or without a vote of the electors of the district, make a levy in any one year which for district purposes, other than for the

payment of interest or principal of bonded indebtedness, shall aggregate over 1.7 per cent of the assessed value of all the taxable property of such district.

SEC. 8. If any section or provision of this act shall be adjudged to be invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not effect the validity of the act as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SEC. 9. Sections 5067, 5069, 5070, 5071, 5072, 5073, 5074, 5075, 5077 and 5107 of Pierce's Washington Code, and all other acts or parts of acts relating to the basis of apportionment of the current state school fund or the county school funds are hereby repealed.

SEC. 10. This act shall take effect and be in full force and effect from and after the first day of July, 1923.

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in office of Secretary of State February 21, 1922.

J. GRANT HINKLE, *Secretary of State.*

ARGUMENT FOR INITIATIVE 46

School "30-10" Equalization Measure—Equality for Children, Justice for Taxpayers

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM

The problem is to give every child in Washington regardless of the accident of birth in a rich or poor school district his American birthright—an equal chance in the public schools. An equal chance means at least nine months of school and the services of a trained teacher.

THE OBSTACLE

The main obstacle standing in the way of school equalization is the unfair system of collecting more than one-half of the money for public school support in small, unequal local district taxation units. Children who live in poor communities are denied the educational opportunities afforded children who live in rich communities. At the same time tax burdens are the heaviest on the poor communities least able to bear them.

THE REMEDY

Collect the money for school support wherever wealth is within the state; then distribute this money where the children are.

Initiative 46 proposes that about one-half of the money necessary for running the common schools be collected by a state-wide tax equal to \$30 per census child. The tax levy for the \$30 would be uniform and equal on all assessed wealth in the state.

Initiative 46 further provides that the state school fund be distributed to the local school districts according to their educational needs—namely, the children attending the public schools. It recognizes the equality of rights of rural and city districts to a fair share of the state school fund. It would make it financially possible for every district in the state to have a full term nine months school.

SPONSORS

Initiative 46 is being sponsored by the Washington State Parent Teacher Association with the cooperation of the Washington Education Association. It has received the endorsement of the State League of Women Voters, The State Federation of Women's Clubs and the State Federation of Labor.

INEQUALITIES OF DISTRICT SUPPORT

(a) One hundred forty-nine districts have short term schools of six and a half months or less.

(b) District number 60, Okanogan County, is one of these short term districts having only six months. Even this costs the district the limit of taxation—20 mills. Why? Because it has eight children to be educated and an assessed valuation of only \$14,453. At the other extreme is district number 303, Clallam County, with an assessed valuation of \$1,901,200, mostly timber. To give its eleven children an excellent school the wealth of the district bears a half-mill tax.

Initiative 46 would pool the resources of both districts to educate the children of both districts to the extent of one-half of the current running expense.

(c) Ten districts with one million dollars valuation each educate respectively 12, 29, 99, 121, 177, 249, 338, 483, 571, 820 children. What chance has either the child or the taxpayer in the last district as compared with the first?

SUMMARY

Initiative 46

(a) Transfers a larger share of responsibility for school support from the inequitable local district basis to the fair state basis.

(b) Would collect one-half of the expenditures for our common schools wherever wealth is within the state and then distribute it where the children are.

(c) Discontinues bonuses to specially favored districts, and distributes the money to all districts according to their needs.

(d) Offers equalization of tax burdens by asking rich districts to come to the relief of poor districts.

(e) Is an extension of the Barefoot School Boy Law and ideal originated by Gov. Rogers.

(f) Would abolish short term schools.

(g) Renders more nearly equal the opportunities for the boys and girls in our public schools.

MRS. C. ARTHUR VARNEY,
MRS. VICTOR H. MILLER,
MRS. VICTOR H. MALSTROM,
School Equalization Committee of the
State Parent Teacher Association.

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in the office of Secretary of State
July 15, 1922.

J. GRANT HINKLE, *Secretary of State.*

ARGUMENT EXPLAINING THE EFFECT OF INITIATIVE 46

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE EQUALIZING EFFECT OF THE STATE SCHOOL FUND?

Every school district pays money into the state school fund according to one law—its assessed wealth, and later receives money from the state school fund according to another law—the number of children in school. Districts with little wealth but many children to be educated receive from the state fund more money than they pay into it. Rich districts with few children pay into the state fund more than they receive in turn. This is the feature that certain forms of wealth object to so strenuously—helping to educate children in districts poor in wealth but rich in children.

The state school fund is sometimes likened to a reservoir. Every district pays money into the reservoir according to its financial ability and receives according to its educational needs. This tends to stabilize the common school system and extend its benefits to all children equally.

HOW DOES THE STATE SCHOOL FUND EQUALIZE TAXES?

By making a uniform levy on all the assessed wealth of the state. Local district tax burdens are heavy or light according to the varying amounts of wealth per child in the local communities. One hundred children in a \$100,000 district will cause extremely heavy local taxation and still receive poor education; while one hundred children in a million dollar district may have excellent educational opportunities and cost the taxpayers only light burdens.

Progressive action during the last few years has tended to decrease the percent of the educational budget contributed by the districts and increase the percent collected on the state as a unit.

Under the present plan the district collects 53% of the running ex-

pense, the counties 16% and the state 31%. Under the proposed "30-10" plan the districts would contribute about 16% less and the state 16% more.

Under progressive transfer from the district to the state a poor district with a tax burden heavier than the state average can reduce its load, while rich districts with less than average tax levy would be asked to accept a fairer share of the burden.

WHAT EFFECT WOULD INITIATIVE 46 HAVE ON THE TAXING POWER OF LOCAL DISTRICTS?

It decreases the amount of money that can be collected in the local district. Under the present plan school boards can levy up to 10 mills while the people by a special vote may levy up to 10 additional mills. Under the proposed plan school boards would be under the same limitation while the limit on the special levy would be reduced from 10 to 7 mills.

WILL INITIATIVE 46 INCREASE THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY TO BE RAISED FOR THE SCHOOLS AS THE OPPOSITION CLAIMS?

Under either the present or the proposed plan the amount of money spent for education is directly responsive to public opinion, for the school budget is entirely under local control. The opposition says that public opinion everywhere wants reduction of taxes. When the local district obtains a larger amount of money from the state and can reduce taxes locally, and when Public Opinion wants taxes reduced what will prevent the reduction?

The truth is: the two questions of amount of money and "equalization" are entirely separate. Public opinion controls the amount to be raised for schools. Whatever that amount is will be equalized more under the "30-10" Initiative 46 plan than under the present plan.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER OPPOSITION CLAIM THAT "20-10" INCREASED EDUCATIONAL COSTS?

Such a claim would ignore that during the period 1914-1921 all costs increased and for one big reason—the World War. The legislature of 1920 recognized partially the educational crisis and placed about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the war increase on the equal state basis, leaving $\frac{2}{3}$ on the unequal district basis. "20-10" was a partial remedy to meet the war situation and not a cause of the situation itself.

WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT OF INITIATIVE 46 ON RURAL SCHOOLS?

The present plan of distributing state school funds discriminates against rural schools, for it is based entirely on days attendance with a minimum of only 2,000 days for each district. Since the attendance is much less per room or teacher in the sparsely settled rural area than in the city, the state apportionment per room or group is less.

To give rural schools a fairer share of the state funds the proposed plan would distribute one-half to the districts on the basis of number of teachers employed. A provision is also included restricting the number of teachers for which a district may receive state funds. This would prevent rich districts from receiving more than their share of state support.

WOULD THE BONUSES TO DISTRICTS FOR ATTENDANCE IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BE CONTINUED?

Under the present law districts receive a state bonus for attendance in private schools, although the chil-

dren in private schools represent no cost to the district. Initiative 46 would discontinue this bonus to the district having private schools and distribute the money equally over the entire state according to the attendance in the public schools.

WHAT RELATION DOES INITIATIVE 46 HAVE TO CONSOLIDATION?

Initiative 46 is a great consolidation itself, making the state a unit for one-half of the cost of the schools. It will do financially for all districts what district consolidation has been able to do for a few schools. All the present needed benefits that now accrue to consolidated districts will be continued.

The bonus, which has no relation to the needs of the district, will be discontinued. For example, this year the richest rural district in the state, number 303, Clallam County, which has \$1,900,000 valuation, eleven pupils and a half-mill tax levy, will receive a state bonus of \$885. This is more than the entire yearly budget for district number 60 in Okanogan County. Under Initiative 46 this bonus would be discontinued to this particular district and distributed equally over the entire state.

DOES INITIATIVE 46 CHANGE THE LOCAL CONTROL OF THE SCHOOL?

Initiative 46 does not change in any way the local control or administration of the districts. It simply provides a more equalized system of finance under the present administrative units.

MRS. C. ARTHUR VARNEY,
MRS. VICTOR H. MILLER,
MRS. VICTOR H. MALSTROM.

School Equalization Committee.
State Parent Teacher Association.

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in the office of Secretary of State July 15, 1922.

J. GRANT HINKLE, *Secretary of State.*

ARGUMENT AGAINST INITIATIVE 46

The 30-10 Measure

Taxes Increased—Inequality Aggravated

Initiative 46, called the 30-10 equalization measure, has the following arguments against it:

1. **It is Misnamed.** It will not "equalize the distribution of school funds and give equal advantages to every child in Washington," but will require an increase in state school taxes of \$3,750,000 annually. A mathematical calculation demonstrates that existing inequalities would be aggravated by the bill.

2. **It is Unnecessary.** No educational emergency exists in this state. The rural school system of Washington is one of the best in the Union, with a maximum of expenditure and of efficiency. Washington's schools average far above those of other states, with "fewer one-room schools and fewer poor districts."

3. **The Measure Will Not Succeed in Its Announced Purpose.** Out of 2,600 school districts less than three per cent need relief. These poor districts will not be relieved by the bill, but their taxes will be increased.

4. **It is Extravagant.** The needy districts can be adequately relieved by less than \$500,000, now available under the existing tax system. The bill, therefore, proposes to raise \$3,750,000 needlessly.

5. **It Will Increase Taxes.** It requires the taxpayers of the state, who now pay \$20 per school child, to pay \$30 per school child into the state public school fund. There are 375,000 school children in the state. The bill, therefore, increases taxation by \$3,750,000 annually.

6. **It Is Based on Deception.** It professes to secure "equality for children and justice for taxpayers." But it cannot give equal opportunity to all school children and it increases heavily the burden now resting on the taxpayer. The claim that the load will be lifted at the other end by the lightening of district taxation is contrary to human experience. The same claim was made with regard to the 20-10 law, but under its provisions the district levy during the

first year of its operation increased \$3,792,805.44. The state of Oregon under similar conditions experienced the same result.

7. **It Changes the Method of Distributing School Funds.** At present school funds are distributed on the basis of pupil attendance. By introducing the number of teachers as a factor in the apportionment of the 30-10 school funds, the new basis of distribution is intended to increase the number of teachers while at the same time increasing their salaries.

8. **It Will Prevent the Consolidation of School Districts by Distributing School Funds on the Basis of Teachers as Well as of Pupil Attendance, and by Destroying the Incentives to Consolidation Given by the Present Law.** Often consolidation will relieve needy districts without increased expense.

9. **It Will Tend to Increase Teachers' Salaries.** More money will be available in all school districts and will be distributed where sixty-five per cent of school expenses go, to the teachers themselves.

10. **With a Bonded Public Indebtedness of a Little More Than \$174,000,000 and a Tax Increase During the Past Six Years of Three Hundred Per Cent the Taxpayers of the State of Washington Are Already Facing the Menace of Confiscation.** Business and industry are being taxed out of existence. The tax burden must be decreased—not increased. The proposed 30-10 initiative bill is a tax-increasing measure and would place an additional heavy and unnecessary burden on the already overburdened taxpayer.

STATE FEDERATION OF TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

By J. T. S. LYLE,

President.

GEORGE C. CONGDON,

Secretary.

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State July 26, 1922.

J. GRANT HINKLE, *Secretary of State.*