



# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4231

## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

**Note:** The ballot title and explanatory statement were written by the Attorney General as required by law. The complete text of House Joint Resolution 4231 begins on page 26.

**Vote cast by the 1990 Legislature on final passage:**

HOUSE: Yeas, 80; Nays, 14; Absent or not voting, 4.

SENATE: Yeas, 35; Nays, 11; Absent or not voting, 3.

### Official Ballot Title:

Shall a constitutional amendment permit voters at an election to approve excess property taxes for up to six-year periods?

### The law as it now exists:

The Washington State Constitution restricts the aggregate of property tax levies to one percent of the true and fair value of property. However, with voter approval, taxing districts can impose excess property tax levies.

## Statement for

### THIS PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY

State law permits local government voters to approve excess levies for one year. Voters of school districts may approve excess levies for either one year or two years.

HJR 4231 alters the number of years of excess levies that voters may approve. Voters of local governments could approve excess levies for up to six years. This change provides flexibility for voters.

Voters still could approve excess levies for one year, but also could approve excess levies for more years, but not exceeding six.

### WHAT IS THE NECESSARY VOTE?

The vote that is necessary to approve excess levies remains a *supermajority* vote. A 60% yes vote still is required. The 40% validating requirement also remains unchanged. A minimum number of voters must vote at the election in which the excess levy is approved.

*Voters still are in charge.* Our approval still must be given each time excess levies are requested.

### COST SAVINGS

The added flexibility will save money. Each election costs money. Many fire districts and school districts submit excess levy requests each year. Considerable cost savings result by allowing voters to approve excess levies for a longer period.

Why not let these costs savings be used to finance education or fire protection, instead of added election costs?

### WHAT GOVERNMENTS WILL USE THIS FLEXIBILITY?

This flexible authority will be used mostly by school districts, fire protection districts, and library districts. Emergency medical service (EMS) levies could be authorized for up to six years. *Vote yes on HJR 4231!*

### Rebuttal of Statement against

Don't be confused by sensational and misleading statements. Opposition statements are in error.

HJR 4231 does not increase taxes. Voters must approve the levy rates. HJR 4231 permits cost savings on elections.

HJR 4231 allows voters to consider the number of years over which levies could be imposed. If voters don't want excess levies for more than one year, they can vote against the levies.

Voters still hold total control. *Vote yes on HJR 4231.*

186-7914  
Voters Pamphlet Statement Prepared by:

MARY MARGARET HAUGEN, State Representative; E.G. "PAT" PATTERSON, State Senator; JUDITH BILLINGS, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Advisory Committee: LARRY ERICKSON, Sheriff, Spokane County; O.T. "BUD" SEIFERT, President, Washington Fire Commissioners Association; NORM RICE, Mayor, City of Seattle; MAE HAMILTON, Chair, North Central Regional Library Board of Trustees.

Under current provisions of the State Constitution voters can be permitted to authorize at a single election specific excess levies for the following time periods: (1) for taxing districts one year, (2) for school districts either a one or two-year period, (3) for school districts' levies for capital projects for up to a six-year period, and (4) for taxing districts issuing bonds for the financing of capital projects an excess tax levy for the number of years needed to retire the bonds.

## The effect of HJR 4231, if approved into law:

The Washington State Constitution would continue to restrict the aggregate of property tax levies to one percent of the true and fair value of property. There would be no change in the voter approval required for taxing districts to impose excess property tax levies.

HJR 4231 would make it permissible under the Washington Constitution for voters of a taxing district at a single election to approve a ballot proposition authorizing for stated purpose or

purposes an excess tax levy for each of six or fewer consecutive years.

The current constitutional provisions relating to school districts for the two year and six year levies would be removed as the new six year provision would be available for school districts. The current provisions of the Constitution permitting at a single election the imposition of excess property taxes for the number of years needed to retire bonds financing capital purposes would not be changed.

## Statement against

### HJR 4231 WILL RAISE YOUR PROPERTY TAXES

The purpose of HJR 4231 is to make it easier and more convenient for local governments to tax your property. Allowing six-year special property tax levies makes them more like the regular property tax levies that are supposed to help fund local government. Special levies are for special or one-time expenditures. Allowing six-year special excess property tax levies will make government less accountable to you. There are over 26 different local taxing districts that could raise your property taxes for up to six years.

### A NEW WAY TO RAISE YOUR PROPERTY TAXES

A second serious flaw in HJR 4231 is that the law passed to implement it will allow special property taxes with no dollar limitation. Special levies today must be based on a dollar amount. HJR 4231 brings back the levy rate option where your property taxes go up as your assessed evaluation goes up. There is no dollar limitation or cap on the special levy.

### HJR 4231 DOES NOT MAKE SENSE

Property values and taxes are soaring in Washington. What is needed is a constitutional amendment to protect homeowners from losing their homes. HJR 4231 will raise your property taxes. Vote "No" on HJR 4231 and ask your legislators to do it right.

## Rebuttal of Statement for

*Flexibility means higher property taxes.*

Flexibility means convenience for local governments, higher property taxes for you. Over 26 local taxing districts would have the "flexibility" to raise your property taxes up to six years, and the option not to tell you how many tax dollars would actually be collected.

Minor election cost savings will be far outweighed by increases in your property taxes.

Vote "NO" on HJR 4231. Send it back to the Legislature.

For more information, call (206) 881-0143.

### Voters Pamphlet Statement Prepared by:

MIKE PATRICK, State Senator; JOHN BETROZOFF, State Representative.



## COMPLETE TEXT OF House Joint Resolution No. 4203

THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article XI, section 3 of the state Constitution to read as follows:

Article XI, section 3. No new counties shall be established, or annexation shall occur, which ~~((shall))~~ at the time of such action reduces any county to a population less than ~~((four))~~ ten thousand ~~((4,000))~~, nor shall a) No new county shall be formed containing a ~~((less))~~ population of less than ~~((two))~~ ten thousand ~~((2,000))~~, except by the consolidation of two or more counties. ~~((There shall be no territory stricken from any county unless a majority of the voters living in such territory shall petition therefor and then only under such other conditions as may be prescribed by a general law applicable to the whole state.))~~

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 2, section 28 of this Constitution, county boundaries shall be described in special laws enacted by the legislature. All portions of the state shall be in a county.

County boundaries shall be altered as follows:

(1) A new county shall be established when: (a) First, the action is initiated by petition of a majority of the voters residing in the proposed new county, but when the proposed new county would take territory out of more than one county the action must be initiated by petition of a majority of the voters residing in each portion of the proposed new county that is located within each county; (b) second, the petitions referred to in (a) are certified by voting precinct; (c) third, the legislature enacts a special law authorizing the creation of the new county; and (d) fourth, a ballot proposition authorizing the creation of the new county is approved by the voters residing in the proposed county. The legislature may establish the boundaries of the new county notwithstanding the boundaries proposed by the petition.

(2) An existing county may annex territory from another county when: (a) First, the action is initiated by either resolution of the legislative authority of the annexing county or petition of twenty-five percent of the voters residing in the area within a county proposed to be annexed; (b) second, the legislative authority of the county from which the area would be removed adopts a resolution authorizing the annexation; (c) third, the legislature enacts a special law providing for the annexation; and (d) fourth, a ballot proposition authorizing the annexation is approved by the voters residing in that area.

(3) Two or more counties may consolidate when: (a) First, the action is initiated in each of the counties proposed to be consolidated by either resolution of the county legislative authority or petition by twenty-five percent of the voters residing in the county; (b) second, the legislature enacts a special law providing for the consolidation; and (c) third, a ballot proposition authorizing the consolidation is approved by the voters of each of the counties.

The legislature may implement this section and may place additional requirements or conditions on the altering of county boundaries by enacting general laws applicable to the entire state.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 2 of this Article, the legislature shall enact general laws applicable to the entire state to establish procedures whereby, at the time of a vote under subsection (1), (2), or (3) of this section, the voters also select the location of a county seat whenever two or more counties consolidate, or the location of a county seat in that portion of a county remaining after an annexation or creation of a new county, if the old county seat is located in the territory removed from the county.

Every county which shall be enlarged or created from territory taken from any other county or counties shall be liable for a just proportion of the existing debts and liabilities of the county or counties from which such territory shall be taken: PROVIDED, That in such accounting neither county shall be charged with any debt or liability then existing incurred in the purchase of any county property, or in the purchase or construction of any county buildings then in use, or under construction, which shall fall within and be retained by the county: PROVIDED FURTHER, That this shall not be construed to affect the rights of creditors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four

times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.



## COMPLETE TEXT OF House Joint Resolution No. 4231

THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article VII, section 2 of the Constitution of the state of Washington to read as follows:

Article VII, section 2. Except as hereinafter provided and notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, the aggregate of all tax levies upon real and personal property by the state and all taxing districts now existing or hereafter created, shall not in any year exceed one ~~((per centum))~~ percent of the true and fair value of such property in money: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That nothing herein shall prevent levies at the rates now provided by law by or for any port or public utility district. The term "taxing district" for the purposes of this section shall mean any political subdivision, municipal corporation, district, or other governmental agency authorized by law to levy, or have levied for it, ad valorem taxes on property, other than a port or public utility district. Such aggregate limitation or any specific limitation imposed by law in conformity therewith may be exceeded only

(a) By any taxing district for each of six or fewer consecutive years and for a stated purpose or purposes, as specified in a ballot proposition authorizing the levy or levies, when specifically authorized so to do by a majority of at least three-fifths of the ~~((electors))~~ voters thereof voting on the proposition to levy such additional taxes submitted not more than twelve months prior to the date on which the proposed initial levy is to be made and not oftener than twice in such twelve month period, either at a special election or at the regular election of such taxing district, at which election the number of ~~((persons))~~ voters voting "yes" on the proposition shall constitute three-fifths of a number equal to forty ~~((per centum))~~ percent of the total ~~((votes cast))~~ number of voters voting in such taxing district at the last preceding general election when the number of ~~((electors))~~ voters voting on the proposition does not exceed forty ~~((per centum))~~ percent of the total ~~((votes cast))~~ number of voters voting in such taxing district in the last preceding general election; or by a majority of at least three-fifths of the ~~((electors))~~ voters thereof voting on the proposition to levy when the number of ~~((electors))~~ voters voting on the proposition exceeds forty ~~((per centum))~~ percent of the total ~~((votes cast))~~ number of voters voting in such taxing district in the last preceding general election ~~((PROVIDED, That notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, any proposition pursuant to this subsection to levy additional tax for the support of the common schools may provide such support for a two year period and any proposition to levy an additional tax to support the construction, modernization, or remodeling of school facilities may provide such support for a period not exceeding six years));~~

(b) By any taxing district otherwise authorized by law to issue general obligation bonds for capital purposes, for the sole purpose of making the required payments of principal and interest on general obligation bonds issued solely for capital purposes, other than the replacement of equipment, when authorized so to do by majority of at least three-fifths of the ~~((electors))~~ voters thereof voting on the proposition to issue such bonds and to pay the principal and interest thereon by an annual tax levy in excess of the limitation herein provided during the term of such bonds, submitted not oftener than twice in any calendar year, at an election held in the manner provided by law for bond elections in such taxing district, at which election the total number of ~~((persons))~~ voters voting on the proposition shall constitute not less than forty ~~((per centum))~~ percent of the total number of ~~((votes cast))~~ voters voting in such taxing district at the last preceding general election: PROVIDED, That any such taxing district shall have the right by vote of its governing body to refund any general obligation bonds of said district issued for capital purposes only, and to provide for the interest thereon and amortization thereof by annual levies in excess of the tax limitation provided for herein, AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the provisions of this section shall also be subject to the limitations contained in Article VIII, Section 6, of this Constitution;

(c) By the state or any taxing district for the purpose of paying the principal

or interest on general obligation bonds outstanding on December 6, 1934; or for the purpose of preventing the impairment of the obligation of a contract when ordered so to do by a court of last resort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.



## COMPLETE TEXT OF Senate Joint Resolution No. 8212

THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article VII, section 11 of the Constitution of the state of Washington to read as follows:

Article VII, section 11. Nothing in this Article VII as amended shall prevent the legislature from providing, subject to such conditions as it may enact, that the true and fair value in money (a) of farms, agricultural lands, standing timber, and timberlands, ~~((and))~~ (b) of other open space lands ~~((which))~~ that are used for recreation or for enjoyment of their scenic or natural beauty, or (c) of properties with dwelling units that comply with health and safety standards, are devoted to low-income house, and contain five or more low-income dwelling units, shall be based on the use to which such property is currently applied, and such values shall be used in computing the assessed valuation of such property in the same manner as the assessed valuation is computed for all property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.

### (Explanatory statement for Initiative Measure 547 continued from page 5)

wetlands, permit economic development consistent with land use goals, protection of water resources, Puget Sound, neighborhoods and property rights, and provide for citizen participation and other factors.

Within 6 months each county is to develop 10 and 20 year population, housing and employment goals. Counties and cities which are subject to the 1990 legislative requirement to develop comprehensive plans would have to do so within 3 years, other counties would have 5 or 7 years. Cities of over 150,000 must have sub-area plans. Sanctions are provided for non-compliance by local governments, including loss of certain local option taxes. Impact fees and excise taxes could be imposed by local governments on development activity for the impacts and potential impacts upon public facilities and housing relocation.

County boundary review boards would be authorized to prevent urban sprawl by denying cities annexations beyond an urban growth area. Extension of water and sewer services beyond urban growth areas is restricted. One, but not the sole, element to avoid platting requirements for the subdivision of land is minimum lot size. This minimum size would increase from 5 acres to 20 acres. The concept of a property owner having a vested right to a permissible land use would be changed to be viewed from the date of the issuance, rather than application date, of a valid permit and would lapse after one year if there was no change of position or substantial reliance.

The Department of Ecology would be restricted in its authority to preempt local requirements in granting a permit for facilities for the disposition of hazardous wastes. State agencies would be prohibited from permitting oil or gas exploration or drilling in marine waters. State agencies would be required to comply with the goals and elements of the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan.

An appropriation of 40 million dollars each biennium is called for by the Act. For the remainder of the current biennium 13.1 million dollars is provided of which 10 million is for grants to local governments.

## VOTER'S CHECKLIST

Every Washington voter will have the opportunity to vote on four statewide measures at the state general election on November 6, 1990. The ballot titles for these measures are reproduced below as a convenience to voters in preparing to go to the polls or cast an absentee ballot. Voters are encouraged to bring any list or sample ballot to the polling place to make voting easier. Contact your local county auditor for a sample ballot containing any local measures or candidates. State law provides: "Any voter may take with him into the polling place any printed or written memorandum to assist him in marking or preparing his ballot." (RCW 29.51.180).

### INITIATIVE MEASURE 547

"Shall state growth and environmental protection goals be implemented by measures including local comprehensive land use planning and development fees?"

YES  NO

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4203

"Shall a constitutional amendment permit basing the tax value of low-income housing of five or more units upon current use?"

YES  NO

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4231

"Shall constitutional provisions governing the creation of new counties be amended to allow requirements for county formation, annexation, and..."

YES  NO

### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8212

"Shall a constitutional amendment permit voters at an election to approve excess property taxes for up to six-year periods?"

YES  NO

## CANDIDATES

U.S. Representative

State Representative

Position 1

State Senator (if applicable)

State Representative

Position 2