

Applications for Pro and Con Committees: Proposition No. 7

Proposition No. 7: PROHIBITING COUNTY GOVERNMENT FROM INTERFERING WITH INITIATIVES AND CHARTER AMENDMENTS

The Whatcom County Charter Review Commission has proposed an amendment to the Whatcom County Charter to prohibit the County Government from taking official action in relation to an Initiative or a Charter Amendment. This measure would amend Articles 5 and 8 of the Whatcom County Charter to prohibit the County Council from acting to impede, alter, or prevent an initiative or Charter Amendment from being placed on the ballot and prohibit any County Official from expending county resources in support of or opposition to an Initiative or Charter Amendment. It would also prohibit the Council from delaying implementation of an initiative or Charter Amendment approved by voters.

PRO: Greg Thames, JG Sandy Phillips, Lindsey Elenbaas, Ashley Butenschoen

CON: No applicants

Pro and Con Committee Application: Proposed Charter Amendments

The Whatcom County Council seeks applicants to prepare statements for the Whatcom County Voters' Pamphlet on proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Charter. Council will appoint up to three members to each pro and con committee during their regular evening meeting on Tuesday, July 22 at 6 p.m.

To volunteer for one or more committees, please submit this form by 12:00 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025.

(Section Break)

First Name	Greg
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Last Name	Thames
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Email Address	
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Phone Number	
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Whatcom County Residency	Yes
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Committee Selection

Indicate your committee preference(s) from the list of proposed amendments below. (Additional information about each amendment is available at www.whatcomcounty.us/4576.)

Authorizing Councilmembers to Hire Dedicated Aides	Field not completed.
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Establishing a Whatcom County Office of the Ombuds	Pro Committee
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Establishing Performance Audits	Pro Committee
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Clarifying the Power and Duties of Elected Officials	Pro Committee
Modifying the Redistricting Process	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Adjusting the Calculation of Signatures Required for a Referendum	Pro Committee
Prohibiting County Government from Interfering with Initiatives and Charter Amendments	Pro Committee
Modifying the Budget Process	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Adding Accountability to Financial Reporting Requirements	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Determining Initial Rules for the Charter Review Commission Meetings	Pro Committee
Adjusting the Calculation of Signatures Required for a Charter Amendment	Pro Committee
Requiring Land Supply and Construction Cost Analysis	Con Committee

(Section Break)

Please provide additional information for Council to consider when making committee appointments (e.g. qualifications, background, resume highlights).	<p>My name is Greg Thames, and I am a longtime resident of Ferndale, Washington. I am dedicated to informed civic engagement and transparent local governance. With a practical background in community reporting and local issue analysis, I actively participate in discussions regarding Whatcom County's government structure and accountability.</p> <p>I hold a degree in Mass Communications with a focus on Photojournalism from Jackson State University. I have experience summarizing complex local government proceedings in clear, everyday language that working families can easily understand. Additionally, I have been involved in</p>
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community discussions about the Charter Review Commission's work, staying informed about proposed amendments and their broader impacts on transparency, fiscal responsibility, and citizen involvement. Also I have attended nearly every charter commission meeting. So I understand the ideas and goals of the commission work.

As a person with strong writing skills, I want to make sure that the public has a clear understanding of each issue. I am also personally committed to ensuring that Whatcom County's governance reflects the will and best interests of its citizens, and that voters receive clear, balanced information when they head to the ballot box. Good information is important for our democracy to work.

Please describe your interest in serving on the committee(s) you selected.

I am volunteering to serve on the Pro/Con Committees for several proposed Charter Amendments because I believe the voters deserve straightforward, unbiased information and fair arguments both for and against each measure. I am especially interested in measures concerning fiscal accountability, the duties of elected officials, redistricting processes, performance audits, and maintaining a fair initiative and referendum process. Serving on these committees is an opportunity for me to help ensure the Voters' Pamphlet accurately reflects diverse perspectives and upholds our County's democratic principles. I am dedicated to working collaboratively with fellow committee members to produce statements that meet the highest standards of clarity and integrity.

I am available to attend the Council meeting on July 22 at 6 p.m. and look forward to the possibility of contributing to this important civic process.

Upload a resume or other supporting documentation.

Field not completed.

Are you available to attend the Council meeting on July 22 at 6 p.m. in case Councilmembers have questions for you?

Yes

(Section Break)

Questions?

Please contact the Council Office at 360-778-5010 if you have any questions.

Pro and Con Committee Application: Proposed Charter Amendments

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(Section Break)

First Name	JG Sandy
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Last Name	Phillips
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Email Address	
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Phone Number	
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Whatcom County Residency	Yes
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(Section Break)

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Authorizing Councilmembers to Hire Dedicated Aides	Pro Committee
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Establishing a Whatcom County Office of the Ombuds	Pro Committee
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Establishing Performance Audits	Pro Committee
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Prohibiting County Government from Interfering with Initiatives and Charter Amendments	Pro Committee
Modifying the Budget Process	Pro Committee
Adding Accountability to Financial Reporting Requirements	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Determining Initial Rules for the Charter Review Commission Meetings	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Adjusting the Calculation of Signatures Required for a Charter Amendment	Pro Committee
Requiring Land Supply and Construction Cost Analysis	<i>Field not completed.</i>
(Section Break)	
Please provide additional information for Council to consider when making committee appointments (e.g. qualifications, background, resume highlights).	I was an unsuccessful candidate for the Charter Review Commission, but in conducting my campaign, I spoke with many of my constituents about the issues addressed by these proposed amendments. I was, and remain, unaligned with any political party and believe that I can bring an independent voice to writing the statements. I attended in person or on zoom many of the commission meetings and tried to make my views as an individual citizen known to the commission about many of these issues.

Please describe your interest in serving on the committee(s) you selected.

I want to continue in my role as an active citizen providing support to our county.

Upload a resume or other supporting documentation.

Field not completed.

Are you available to attend the Council meeting on July 22 at 6 p.m. in case Councilmembers have questions for you?

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(Section Break)

First Name	Lindsey
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Last Name	Elenbaas
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Phone Number	
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Establishing Performance Audits	Field not completed.
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Requiring Land Supply and Construction Cost Analysis	Pro Committee
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Please provide additional information for Council to consider when making committee appointments (e.g. qualifications, background, resume highlights).	I have an extensive background in finance, real estate and business. I've served the board of a nonprofit credit union and many other local organizations. I believe these experiences make me uniquely qualified to serve in this capacity.
Please describe your interest in serving on the committee(s) you selected.	I was either a sponsor or worked extensively on the amendments I've applied to serve on the pro/con committee for. I am eager for an opportunity to follow these particular amendments through to the ballot in November.

Upload a resume or other supporting documentation.

Field not completed.

Are you available to attend the Council meeting on July 22 at 6 p.m. in case Councilmembers have questions for you?

Yes

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First Name	Ashley
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Last Name	Butenschoen
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Please provide additional information for Council to consider when making committee appointments (e.g. qualifications, background, resume highlights).	As a 22-year Whatcom County resident, small business owner, parent, and dedicated community leader, I am committed to transparency, civic engagement, and amplifying the voice of the people in local government. I serve on multiple local nonprofit boards, advocating for disaster survivors, veterans, and our most vulnerable. In my professional role, I work locally and statewide, leading large-scale grassroots efforts focused on ballot initiatives and voter engagement.

Please describe your interest in serving on the committee(s) you selected.

I am seeking to serve on these committees because I believe each of these proposed charter amendments will significantly shape the effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of our local government.

I am requesting to serve on the Con Committee for the proposed Office of the Ombuds because I am concerned about the cost, redundancy, and oversight challenges of creating a new government office. I believe we should first improve and strengthen existing mechanisms for public feedback and accountability before expanding government bureaucracy.

I would like to serve on the Pro Committee for the amendment prohibiting County Government from interfering with Initiatives and Charter Amendments, as I have firsthand experience with the initiative process. I strongly support protecting the public's right to petition their government without interference. This amendment reinforces trust in our democratic process and ensures elected officials cannot use their positions to obstruct the will of the voters.

I also wish to join the Con Committee for the amendment adjusting the signature calculation for Charter Amendments. While civic engagement is essential, I believe the current threshold helps ensure proposals have broad public backing before moving forward. Reducing the requirement may unintentionally weaken the standard needed to place foundational changes before voters.

Finally, I am requesting to serve on the Pro Committee for the amendment authorizing Councilmembers to hire dedicated aides. I believe this change would enhance transparency, communication, and accessibility between Councilmembers and their constituents. Dedicated staff support can help ensure Councilmembers are more informed, responsive, and effective in representing their districts.

Serving on these committees aligns with my passion for civic engagement, good governance, and citizen-led reform. I would be honored to help facilitate meaningful public dialogue on these important measures.

Upload a resume or other supporting documentation.

Field not completed.

Are you available to attend the Council meeting on July 22 at 6 p.m. in case Councilmembers have questions for you?

(Section Break)

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