

Whatcom County Auditor's Office

Ballot Measure Coversheet

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District Name:	Whatcom County			
District Address:	311 Grand Ave, Bellinghar	n, WA 998225		
Contact Person 1		Contact Person 2		
	avis, Clerk of the Council	Jackie Lassiter, Legislative Clerk		
Name & Title	,	Name & Title	9.014.110 0.1011	
360-778-5010	DBrown@co.whatcom.wa.us	360-778-5018 jlassite@co.whatcom.wa.us		
Phone & email		Phone & email		
/Aitomey/Informa	Han			
Karen Frak				
Name & Title		Has your attorney prepared this ballot measure?		
360-778-5757	kfrakes@co.whatcom.wa.us	⊙ Yes () No	
Phone & email				
Are the following	required documents included?	(dirdeo	ne)	
Resolution with original signature	es or a certified copy	Yes	No	
Explanatory Statem prepared by your atto	ent rney, not to exceed 100 words	Yes	No	
"For" and "Against"	' Committee Appointment Forms	Yes	No	
Completed Ballot M	easure Coversheet	Yes	No	
Complete if anythi	ng is missing			
I understand that the	e deadline to submit the missing			
information is	·	Receive	d In Person	
The Auditor's Office will not begin processing this ballot		AUG	0 1 2022	
measure until all req	uired documents have been submitted.		County Elections	
40		AAHarconi	AAMITA PURADASA	
Presenter's Signature	The same of the sa		Deputy Auditor's Signature	



Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE 311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105 Bellingham, WA 98225-4038 (360) 778-5010

Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2022-303

File ID:

AB2022-303

Version:

Status: Adopted

File Created:

05/17/2022

Entered by:

DBrown@co.whatcom.wa.us

Department:

Council Office

File Type:

Ordinance

Assigned to: Agenda Date: Council 06/07/2022

Primary Contact Email: DBrown@co.whatcom.wa.us

Final Action: 06/07/2022

Enactment #: ORD 2022-045

TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Ordinance providing for the submission of a proposition to the qualified electors of Whatcom County authorizing the County to lift the limit on regular property taxes under Chapter 84.55 RCW for the purpose of funding for childcare, early learning programs, and increased support for vulnerable children

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

This ordinance submits to the Whatcom County Auditor, for inclusion on the ballot in a special election to be held concurrently with the November 8, 2022, general election, a proposition to the qualified voters of the County to approve or reject a levy above the regular property tax limitations established in RCW 84.55.010 for the funding of childcare and early childhood programs to improve kindergarten readiness and funding for support of homeless and otherwise vulnerable children. The proposed levy lid lift authorized by this proposition would permit the County to increase its regular property tax levy by \$0.19 per \$1000 of assessed valuation, resulting in a regular property tax levy of \$0.94 per \$1000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2023 (calculated using the regular property tax rate in 2022, based on total assessed value in 2021), and to increase the levy thereafter as allowed by chapter 84.55 RCW to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of the levy lid lift for a term of ten (10) years. The amount collected in 2023 and in the following 9 years will be approximately \$8,200,000.00 annually. Pursuant to RCW 84.55.050(5), the maximum regular property taxes that may be levied in 2032 for collection in 2033 and in later years shall be computed as if the proposition under this resolution had not been approved.

Date:	Acting Body:			Action:	Sent To:
05/24/2022	Council			SUBSTITUTE INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING	Council
		Aye:	7	Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Fra	azey, Galloway, and Kershner
		Nay:	0		
		Absent:	0		
06/07/2022	Council			ADOPTED	
		Aye:	5	Buchanan, Donovan, Frazey, Galloway, a	and Kershner
		Nay:	1	Elenbaas	
		Absent:	0		
		Abstain:	1	Byrd	

Attachments:

Proposed Ordinance for June 7, Link to AB2022-303 Public Comments, Letter from Child and

Family Well-Being Task Force

PROPOSED BY: <u>BUCHANAN AND DONOVAN</u>
INTRODUCTION DATE: MAY 24, 2022

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-045

PROVIDING FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A PROPOSITION TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF WHATCOM COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY TO LIFT THE LIMIT ON REGULAR PROPERTY TAXES UNDER CHAPTER 84.55 RCW FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE, EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS, AND INCREASED SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

WHEREAS, studies show that 90% of the human brain is developed before the age of 5. This period before kindergarten is the critical window for children to learn the basic skills to have a successful life and be ready to learn in school, such as attention, motivation, coordination, and self-esteem; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately 10,000 children under the age of 5 in Whatcom County, and up to 5,000 lack access to early learning because there are not enough spaces available. This childcare gap is worse in rural areas of the county; and

WHEREAS, studies show that children who go to high-quality preschool are more likely to read proficiently by the third grade, and more likely to graduate and go on to post-high school education such as college, technical school, or training programs that lead to good jobs as adults; and

WHEREAS, recent data shows that only 46% of students in Whatcom County, and only 25% of children of color, enter kindergarten fully ready to learn; and

WHEREAS, research shows that, for every dollar invested in early childhood programs, between \$7 and \$13 are saved in benefits to the community, including higher graduation rates, lower incarceration rates, and lower healthcare costs. Whatcom County currently spends only 2% of its budget on programs related to families, but spends much more responding to situations involving severe mental illness and homelessness, and on incarceration; and

WHEREAS, over 85% of Whatcom County businesses report staffing challenges from lack of childcare access; and

WHEREAS, increased wages would help attract, train, and keep high quality educators and providers for children in Whatcom County. Child care workers are essential, but their salaries have not kept up with the cost of living. Most earn minimum wage; less than \$30,000 a year on average; and

WHEREAS, chapter 84.55 RCW generally limits the dollar amount of regular property taxes that a county may levy in any year, but RCW 84.55.050 allows a county to levy taxes exceeding such limit by majority approval of the voters, allows a county to include in the ballot proposition a limit on the purpose for which the additional taxes levied

will be used and allows the proposition to provide for the expiration of the additional taxing authority; and

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Council finds that the best interests of the citizens of Whatcom County require the submission of a proposition to the qualified voters of the County, in a special election to be held concurrently with the general election on November 8, 2022, to approve or reject a levy above the regular property tax limitations established in RCW 84.55.010 for the funding of childcare and early childhood programs to improve kindergarten readiness and funding for support of homeless and otherwise vulnerable children; and

WHEREAS, the proposed levy lid lift authorized by this proposition would permit the County to increase its regular property tax levy by \$0.19 per \$1000 of assessed valuation, resulting in a regular property tax levy of \$0.94 per \$1000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2023 (calculated using the regular property tax rate in 2022, based on total assessed value in 2021), and to increase the levy thereafter as allowed by chapter 84.55 RCW to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of the levy lid lift for a term of ten (10) years. The amount collected in 2023 and in the following 9 years will be approximately \$8,200,000.00 annually; and

WHEREAS, the County wishes to exempt those individuals that qualify for property tax exemptions under RCW 84.36.381; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 84.55.050(5), the maximum regular property taxes that may be levied in 2032 for collection in 2033 and in later years shall be computed as if the proposition under this resolution had not been approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that:

SECTION 1 LEVY SUBMITTAL: To provide necessary funding for the purposes identified in Section 3 of this ordinance, the County Council shall submit to the qualified electors of the County a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW which would allow the County, commencing in 2023 and thereafter continuing for an additional 9 years, to collect additional property taxes in the amount of \$0.19 per \$1000 of assessed valuation, for a total regular property tax of \$0.94 per \$1000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2023. This proposed additional levy is within the limitations set by RCW 84.52.043.

 SECTION 2 DEPOSIT OF LEVY PROCEEDS: All levy proceeds shall be deposited into a fund, to be known as the Healthy Children's Fund, which shall be created by ordinance, and these funds and proceeds thereon shall be used exclusively for the purposes outlined in Section 3.

SECTION 3 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES:

A. The Healthy Children's Fund shall be used exclusively for the following:

1. Increasing Affordable, High-Quality, Professional, and Accessible Early Learning and Child Care Opportunities. Young children of all backgrounds will

have increased access to affordable, high-quality, professional, and accessible early learning and child care experiences that meet the unique needs of families across Whatcom County.

a. Funding in this area must address each of the following priorities:

Affordable: Decrease the cost of early learning and child care experiences for both families and providers.

High-Quality: Increase the quality of early learning and child care experiences.

Professional: Attract and retain quality early childhood educators.

Accessible: Expand early learning and child care services that meet the varied needs of families and children. Geographic locations, ages of children, special needs, and a broad range of child care scheduling needs (including emergency child care opportunities) will all be considered in the development.

- 2. Helping vulnerable children of all backgrounds, including homeless and at-risk children. Vulnerable children of all backgrounds will have increased access to the support they need, either directly or through support for their families, including mental and behavioral health services and housing stability programs. For the purposes of this ordinance, 'vulnerable children' are defined as any children at greater risk of experiencing physical or emotional harm and/or experiencing poor outcomes because of one or more factors in their lives, including but not limited to homeless and foster children.
 - a. Funding in this area must address each of the following priorities:

Expand Mental and Behavioral Health: Expand mental health services for vulnerable children and their families.

Prevent and reduce homelessness of vulnerable children: Reduce the instances of vulnerable children experiencing homelessness, through diversion and other preventative services and reduce the trauma associated with homelessness by supporting interim

housing services and trauma-focused system reform directed at vulnerable children and their families.

Support Vulnerable Children's Parents: Expand supports and services for families who have or are expecting children deemed to be vulnerable.

- b. Services funded under this section shall not include those that are already funded through the Continuum of Care system for homelessness that is part of the federal and state-mandated Coordinated Entry System.
- 3. Help all children be ready for kindergarten. Improvements to child care and early learning programs under this measure must be designed to advance the goal that children of all backgrounds in Whatcom County should enter kindergarten prepared and ready to learn.

- 4. **Independent Performance Audits and Oversight:** Ensure that taxpayer money is well spent achieving the goals adopted by the County Council in this ordinance and endorsed by the voters through passage of the levy.
- B. Funding requirements and limitations:
 - 1. The County shall ensure that the Healthy Children's Fund is used exclusively to sustain an increase in overall public expenditures for eligible services as set forth in this ordinance. Money in the Healthy Children's Fund shall not be used in lieu of federal, state, county, city or school district funding already committed for the purpose of providing outlined services.
 - 2. All service providers, vendors and subcontractors of the Healthy Children's Fund shall be selected by fund administrators in compliance with County purchasing procedures. All service providers shall have and adhere to robust anti-discrimination and child protection policies. All contracts for service resulting from The Healthy Children's Fund should state the contract's objective, whether from this ordinance or the Community Health Improvement Plan.
 - 3. Reimbursements to the County for administrative costs, evaluation, and overhead shall be limited to nine percent of levy proceeds, with up to three percent used for auditing and evaluation.
 - 4. The Healthy Children's Fund may maintain reserve funds. It is intended that substantially all levy proceeds will be used for the purposes set forth in this ordinance within the ten-year levy period, and reserves maintained after the ninth year of the levy must be supported by a formal statement justifying the need for the reserve.

SECTION 4 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

- 1. The Department of Health shall serve as the fund administrator to develop an implementation plan and oversee the implementation of the Healthy Children's Fund. However, should the County later create a new department or entity that is a more appropriate fund administrator, the County Executive, with the concurrence of the County Council, may transfer the role of fund administrator to that new department or entity.
- 2. The Fund Administrator shall develop an implementation plan that identifies the specific strategies and projects to be funded and the outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy proceeds.
- 3. This implementation plan shall, to the maximum extent possible, be developed in collaboration with the Child and Family Well-being Taskforce, an existing community board established by the Whatcom County Council, and shall be approved by the County Council and transmitted to the County Executive by March 31, 2023, and every 2 years thereafter to be included as part of the budget submitted to the Council.
- 4. The Implementation Plan, including the spending plan, shall be open to and shared with the public. Before submitting to the County Executive, the Fund Administrator shall seek input from relevant advisory groups, including the Child and Family Well-Being Taskforce. The implementation plan should also include the following information:

- a) Details of fund allocations across eligible expenditures and strategies, including as a percentage of the fund revenue;
- Working criteria for fund allocation to guide the granting and/or contracting process for non-administrative expenses;
- c) An overview of the granting/contracting process that includes opportunities for community members to provide input in to fund allocation decisions; and;
- d) Opportunities for leveraging the fund and bringing in external resources to the county.
- 5. The initial 2-year Implementation Plan shall allocate no less than 55% and no more than 68% of levy revenue and proceeds to improving early learning and care through the strategies outlined in paragraph 3.A.1 and shall allocate no less than 20% and no more than 36% of levy revenue and proceeds to supporting vulnerable children through the strategies outlined in paragraph 3.A.2.
- 6. In subsequent years of the fund, adjustments can be made to the allocations by the County Council based on the information reflected in the independent audit, recommendations by the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force, the emergent needs of our community, and changes in state and federal funding availability.

SECTION 5 INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE AUDITS AND OVERSIGHT:

- 1. Every other year, a qualified independent auditor shall conduct a performance audit of the Healthy Children's Fund. The auditor shall be selected in compliance with County purchasing procedures. The auditor shall develop the audit process in consultation with the Child and Family Well-Being Taskforce, which shall also provide feedback on the draft audit before its submission to the County Council. The audit shall:
 - a) Collect and review data and evaluate progress towards achieving the goals and strategies adopted in section 3;
 - b) Collect and report on feedback from stakeholders, including users and providers;
 - c) Include qualitative and quantitative sources; and
 - d) Include recommendations for improvements or adjustments.
- 2. The Child and Family Well-Being Taskforce, with the support of the Fund Administrator, will write and deliver an annual report to the public and the County Council. This shall include progress made toward agreed upon goals, outcomes, and metrics. Fund Administrators shall use this report, and recommendations from the Evaluation, to make improvements in fund administration.

SECTION 6 CALL FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION: In accordance with RCW 29A.04.32I, the Whatcom County Council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with the general election on November 8, 2022, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The Whatcom County Auditor shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and

general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The Clerk of the Council shall certify that proposition to the County Auditor in substantially the following form: PROPOSITION XX: The Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance No. 2022-045 concerning funding to

address the well-being of children. If approved, this proposition would authorize the County to increase property taxes to fund childcare, early learning programs, and increased support for vulnerable children. This measure would increase property taxes for ten consecutive years in the amount of \$0.19/\$1000 in assessed valuation (to a total rate of \$0.94/\$1000 in assessed valuation for collection in 2023) for collection in 2023-2032, subject to the limit factors in chapter 84.55 RCW and the exemptions in RCW 84.36.381. Should this proposition be approved?

□ Yes □ No

SECTION 7 CORRECTIONS: The Prosecuting Attorney is authorized to make such minor adjustments to the wording of this proposition as may be required that do not change its substantive meaning and are consistent with the intent of this ordinance.

SECTION 8 EXPLANATORY STATEMENT: The Prosecuting Attorney shall prepare an Explanatory Statement based on this ordinance for use in the Voters' Pamphlet.

SECTION 9 SEVERABILITY: If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

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32	ADORTED this 17th day of June , 20	22.
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36	ATTESTE COUNT	WHATCOM/COUNTY, WASHINGTON
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38	The Day	- Commenter of the Comm
39	Dana Brown-Davis, Glerk of the Council	Tode Donovan, Council Chair
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42	WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE	
43	APPROVED AS TO FORM:	WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON
44		
45	/s/ Karen Frakes (approved via e-mail 6/7/22) /JL	The second
46	Karen Frakes	Page 1
47	Civil Deputy Prosecutor	Satpal Sidhu,
48		County Executive
49		Α
50		() Approved () Denied
51		
52		Date Signed: June 8,2022

ADDENDUM A: Children's Initiative Levy Lid Lift Ballot Title, as amended by Karen Frakes, as allowed under Section 7 or Ordinance 2022-045

Whatcom County, Washington Proposition No. ___ Children's Initiative Levy Lid Lift

The Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance No. 2022-045 concerning funding to address the well-being of children. If approved, this proposition would authorize the County to increase property taxes to fund early learning programs, childcare, and support for homeless or otherwise vulnerable children. This measure would increase the regular property tax levy for ten consecutive years by \$0.19/\$1,000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2023-2032 (for a total rate of \$0.94/\$1,000 of assessed valuation in 2023), generating approximately \$8,200,000 annually, subject to limit factors in RCW 84.55 and exemptions in RCW 84.36.381. Should this proposition be approved?

Yes	
No_	

CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE LEVY LID LIFT EXPLANATORY STATEMENT:

This proposition would authorize Whatcom County to levy an additional regular property tax at the rate of \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation on all taxable property within Whatcom County to fund increased early childhood programs and affordable childcare to improve kindergarten readiness and increased access to support for homeless and otherwise vulnerable children. The levy would be authorized for a ten-year period, with collection beginning in 2023. Levy funds would be deposited in a separate fund ("Healthy Children's Fund") which would be subject to an independent performance audit every other year to evaluate progress and recommend improvements or adjustments.



Whatcom County Auditor's Office

Committee Appointment Form

B) सिर्देशीयोहरू होत	किर शिक्तप्रधारक क्षिक्रियाक्षिक ।		5		
District Name:	Whatcom County				
Proposition N	Children's Initiative	Levy Lid Lit	ft		
Appointment		(4.4)	Committee Formed:		
Commit®	ee FOR Committee AG	1. 2.3.3	Committee FOR	☐ Committee AGAINST	
NOTE:		(red	ions taken to solicit commi quired, select <u>at least</u> 3 and Ilicable):	ttee members provide documentation when	
The Chair of the committee will serve as the contact person for Auditor's staff. The Chair will also be the recipient of the opposing committee's statement so the rebuttal can be prepared. The phone numbers and e-mail addresses listed below will not be published. However, the information provided on this form is subject to public disclosure laws under RCW 42.56 and 42.17. A copy of this form will be released to anyone requesting it.			 □ Posting the request on the jurisdiction's website, if they have one □ Requesting volunteers to serve at any commissioner meeting when the proposal is being discussed □ Making direct phone calls to potential individuals □ Putting up flyers on bulletin boards in libraries, grocery stores, or other community boards □ Submitting a news release or letter to the editor to the newspapers (whether for printed version or online version) requesting volunteers (A "paid ad" in the Legal Notices is not required) □ Posting on a reader board or sandwich board □ Recruiting at any district events (i.e. monthly pancake feed) □ Putting notice in emails or newsletters sent to individuals in the district □ Inserts in bills □ Other direct mail/email notifications □ Other: 		
Committee:					
and the second s	Name		Phone	email	
ı. Chair	Emily O'Connor		360-671-7663	emilyf21@hotmail.com	
2. Member	Guy Occhiogrosso		360.746.0738	guy@bellingham.com	
3. Member	Mike Hammes		360-815-1144	mike@ramconstruction-wa.com	
been taken to so	he above name individuals have been a plicit committee members. ature (individual with authority to sign to		e consented to serve as inc	dicated, or at least 3 actions have	



3. Member

Whatcom County Auditor's Office

Committee Appointment Form

District%(Ballo	aMeasure Information				
District Name:	istrict Name: Whatcom County				
Proposition Name: Children's Initiative Levy Lid Lift					
Appointment of:		No Committee Formed:			
☐ Committee	FOR Committee AGAINST	☐ Committee FOR ☐ Committee AGAINST			
	committee will serve as the contact person f. The Chair will also be the recipient of the	Actions taken to solicit committee members (required, select at least 3 and provide documentation when applicable): Posting the request on the jurisdiction's website, if they have one Requesting volunteers to serve at any commissioner meeting when the proposal is being discussed Making direct phone calls to potential individuals Putting up flyers on bulletin boards in libraries, grocery stores, or other community boards			
opposing commi prepared.	ttee's statement so the rebuttal can be				
not be published form is subject to	ers and e-mail addresses listed below will . However, the information provided on this o public disclosure laws under RCW 42.56 of this form will be released to anyone	 □ Submitting a news release or letter to the editor to the newspapers (whether for printed version or online version) requesting volunteers (A "paid ad" in the Legal Notices is not required) □ Posting on a reader board or sandwich board □ Recruiting at any district events (i.e. monthly pancake feed) □ Putting notice in emails or newsletters sent to individuals in the district □ Inserts in bills □ Other direct mail/email notifications □ Other: 			
Committee:					
	Name	Phone	email		
1. Chair	Laurie Williams	360-223-2912	Laurie@c-t-construction.com		
2. Member John Marshall		360-746-8206	marshalljmm@gmail.com		
		}			

I hereby certify the above name individuals have been appointed and have consented to serve as indicated, or at least 3 actions have been taken to solicit committee members.

Authorized Signature (individual with authority to sign for the district)

Queguet 1, 2022