



Nov 8, 2016 General Election Ballot Measure Summary Series

Measures: State of Washington Advisory Measures 14 & 15

Ballot Title (what you will see on the ballot):

Advisory Vote 14: The legislature extended, without a vote of the people, the insurance premium tax to some insurance for stand-alone family dental plans, costing an indeterminate amount in the first ten years, for government spending. This tax increase should be:

- Repealed
- Maintained

Advisory Vote 15: The legislature imposed, without a vote of the people, certain limitations on the retail sales and use tax exemptions for clean alternative-fuel vehicles, costing \$2,000,000 in the first ten years, for government spending. This tax increase should be:

- Repealed
- Maintained

(official – as written by the Attorney General’s Office)

Summary:

What’s an advisory vote?

Advisory votes are the result of Initiative 960, approved by voters in 2007. Most of Initiative 960 was declared unconstitutional by the courts, but this small piece of Initiative 960 remains. The language of the measures is strictly directed by the directive of Initiative 960, particularly the structure “The legislature imposed/extended, without a vote of the people, ...” which begins every advisory measure placed on the ballot under this initiative.

This language is deceiving. *Every* action the Legislature takes is done without a vote of the people, not just these advisory measures, with the exception of when the Legislature sends a referendum to the people. This is the correct way representative democracy is supposed to work. Decision-makers in the form of state representatives and state senators are elected to study each issue and vote in the best interests of citizens. Different decision-makers can be elected in subsequent elections if citizens disagree with decisions.

Advisory votes are non-binding. The results will not change the law or taxes in any way, shape or form, even though the measures are phrased as if we, the public, are advising the Legislature to repeal or maintain a tax increase. We are not. The action taken has already long since been implemented. At best, these are simply very expensive opinion polls taken long after the information would have been useful for the legislature’s consideration.

These advisory measures often concern very small taxes, or closing tax loopholes and ensuring that everyone pays their fair share. In many cases, the cost of adding these advisory measures to the ballot and conducting the election for the advisory measures, *is a greater cost of tax dollars to the state than the amount of money that the measure itself concerns.*

Immediate Effects, if Passed: None.

Fiscal Effects, if passed: None.

Arguments for the measure:

The outcome of the vote is immaterial to the current functioning of Washington state government.

Arguments against the measure:

The outcome of the vote is immaterial to the current functioning of Washington state government.