

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



February 6, 2024

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
Chair, House Education Committee

Representative Clyde Shavers
Vice Chair, House Education Committee

Re: Request for a public hearing on Initiative 2081

Dear Chair Santos and Vice Chair Shavers:

We are writing to formalize our request to schedule a public hearing on Initiative 2081 (Concerning parental rights relating to their children's public school education). Over 400,000 Washingtonians signed this initiative, telling us this is important public policy that we should consider. Their voices deserve to be heard in the legislative process.

Article II, Section 1 of the Washington State Constitution requires the Legislature to extend "precedence" to certified initiatives to the Legislature. It is settled law that no word in the state constitution may be ignored or rendered superfluous: *Washington Water Power Co. v. Graybar Elec. Co.*, 112 Wn.2d 847, 859 (1989); *Group Health Coop. v. King Cy. Med. Soc'y*, 39 Wn.2d 586, 637 (1951). Simply put: the requirement to give these initiatives "precedence" imposes a mandatory obligation upon the Legislature.

Although no case law specifically addresses what "precedence" entails, we believe that at the very least it requires the Legislature to engage in formal consideration of the policy brought before us by the people. The way each chamber begins its formal consideration of a policy is through a public hearing.

As you know, House Republicans moved to suspend the rules upon referral to add instructions for the House Education Committee to promptly schedule Initiative 2081 for a public hearing. While that motion failed, the Majority Leader pointed out that initiatives to the Legislature are not subject to cutoff. Given the compressed schedule in this 60-day legislative session, we request scheduling I-2081 for a public hearing alongside Senate bills during the normal hearing process after house of origin cutoff. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Skyler Rude in black ink.

Representative Skyler Rude
Ranking Member, House Education Committee

Handwritten signature of Joel McEntire in black ink.

Representative Joel McEntire
Assistant Ranking Member, House Education Committee