

State of  
Washington  
House of  
Representatives



Feb. 6, 2024

Representative Marcus Riccelli  
Chair, House Health Care and Wellness Committee

Representative Jessica Bateman  
Vice Chair, House Health Care and Wellness Committee

Re: Request for a public hearing on Initiative 2124

Dear Chair Riccelli and Vice Chair Bateman:

We are writing to urge you to schedule a public hearing on Initiative 2124, concerning state long-term care insurance. More than 400,000 Washingtonians signed each of the initiatives, telling us they are 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 Health Care and Wellness Committee to promptly schedule Initiative 2124 for a public hearing. Every Democratic member voted against this motion. In opposing the motion, the Majority Leader pointed out that initiatives to the Legislature are not subject to cutoff. However, the House Health Care and Wellness Committee tentatively has only four meetings scheduled after opposite house policy committee cutoff. Given the compressed schedule in this 60-day legislative session, we urge you to schedule this initiative for a public hearing alongside Senate bills during the normal hearing process after house of origin cutoff on Feb. 13.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Representative Joe Schrick in black ink.

Representative Joe Schrick  
Ranking Member  
House Health Care and Wellness Committee

Handwritten signature of Representative Spencer Hutchins in black ink.

Representative Spencer Hutchins  
Assistant Ranking Member  
House Health Care and Wellness Committee