

Another Tim Eyman scam bites the dust: I-1648 fails to qualify for the November ballot

There goes another one.

Disgraced initiative promoter Tim Eyman was forced to admit failure yet again today as his scheme to overturn the Legislature's 2019 revenue reforms met its demise in Olympia at the Secretary of State's Elections Annex on Union Street.

Initiative 1648 sought to blow up the state budget by repealing the modest changes the House and Senate made to balance Washington's tax code as part of the 2019–2021 operating budget. It also sought to slap a one year expiration date on any future revenue increase not subjected to a public vote.

Although Eyman filed I-1648 back in January, he did not launch a signature drive for it until May, after the legislative session had concluded and after he had [thrown in the towel on Referendum 80](#), his short-lived effort to force a vote on the new salary schedule approved by the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries For Elected Officials for legislators and statewide elected officials.



An unhappy Tim Eyman was flanked by glum followers at the Secretary of State's Elections Annex in Olympia. (Photo: Sherry Bockwinkel for NPI).

Eager to make I-1648 more than just another forgettable ploy for money, Eyman teamed up with the secessionist group "Liberty State" PAC (or LSPAC) to put some muscle behind the measure instead of phoning it in.

(LSPAC is the militant, Matt Shea-affiliated group that seeks to break up Washington State and carve a large right wing utopia out of one of the two pieces, which would stretch from the Cascade Mountains to the Idaho border.)

LSPAC giddily latched on to I-1648, distributing petitions to right wing activists far and wide. It organized a Facebook group for I-1648 and created a database of locations where I-1648 petitions could be found, delighting Eyman, who cranked up his hype machine as loud as it could go, enlisting his amen chorus on right wing talk radio to advertise I-1648. John Carlson, Kirby Wilbur, Dori Monson, and Saul Spady all dutifully pitched in to give Eyman free airtime.

But it wasn't enough.

[Despite predicting a "tsunami" of signatures for I-1648 on Dori Monson's show earlier this week](#), the petitions Eyman was counting on never materialized, demonstrating once again how difficult it is to get on the ballot without hired help.

Late in the afternoon, with the clock ticking on the deadline to submit signatures in support of initiatives to the people for 2019, a deflated Eyman finally conceded defeat. Because the Secretary of State will only accept petitions that contain at least the minimum number of signatures required to qualify, Eyman and his cohorts ended up having nothing to turn in.

Initially, Eyman was evasive with respect to offering an estimate of how many signatures had been gathered. Under pressure to supply a number, Eyman eventually said that nearly 200,000 had been gathered. He repeated that figure in a video recorded in his car and posted to Facebook a short while later.

We have no way of knowing if that number holds any water, however, because Tim Eyman is about the least trustworthy person in the history of the State of Washington. As noted above, there will not be an official count of I-1648 signatures since no petitions were actually turned in for processing.

Secretary of State Kim Wyman's staff, however, had assumed there would be petitions to process for I-1648, because Eyman had made an appointment with them to turn in signatures. Consequently, they had workers standing by at taxpayer expense to begin the validation and verification process.

This is not the first time an Eyman signature drive has ended this way.

In 2004, Eyman and his associates Jack and Mike Fagan hauled boxes of petitions for I-864 into the Elections Annex to use as props. They proceeded to hold a press conference congratulating themselves on running an amazingly successful campaign despite not having collected enough signatures to qualify. I-864 — a scheme to slash property taxes — disappeared into the dustbin.

Two years later, Eyman linked up with the fundamentalist right to spearhead a referendum campaign intended to overturn Washington's groundbreaking law banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

With minutes to go before the deadline, [Eyman poured himself some sparkling cider and proceeded to announce the campaign had come up short](#), to the great dismay of multiple right wing church pastors and their political operatives, who proceeded to point fingers at each other in quick fashion.

As with I-864, no petitions were ultimately submitted.

[In our statement reacting to the demise of I-1648](#), I explained that the measure represented a significant and grave threat to countless public services that benefit Washingtonians, from education and behavioral health to firefighting and fish passage modernization. Passage of the measure would have blown up the budget, endangering our communities and jeopardizing good paying jobs.

The demise of I-1648 is especially welcome considering that Eyman has already gotten something destructive onto this year's ballot. That would be I-976, a scheme to wipe out billions in bipartisan transportation investments at the state, regional, and local levels. [We're working to defeat I-976, and we invite you to join us](#). If we can send I-976 to the graveyard where it belongs, then Tim Eyman will be zero for seven since 2015 — a truly unprecedented losing streak.

We know from experience that the only way to stop Eyman's destructive initiative factory is to take him on and beat him. Let's make it happen!

Written by **Andrew Villeneuve** :: 10:54 PM

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