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Spokane Voters Adopt Higher Threshold for Tax Increases

State's second-largest city approves WPC idea and recommendation

SPOKANE — Spokane voters this week adopted a higher threshold to raise taxes. Proposition 2 — a Washington Policy Center idea and recommendation — amended the city charter to require all tax increases get either five of seven members of the city council, or simple majority approval of voters. The policy change was modeled after the state-approved two-thirds requirement to raise taxes in the legislature.

“Voters in Spokane have made it clear they want leaders to engage in a greater discussion about tax increases and budgeting priorities,” explained WPC Eastern Washington director Chris Cargill. “Voter approval of this WPC idea ensures that will happen.”

Spokane becomes the first city in the state to adopt a supermajority requirement to increase taxes. Last fall, voters in Pierce County adopted a similar supermajority requirement for tax hikes — also, a first in the state for a county.

At the state level, voters have approved the two-thirds requirement for tax increases five times — 1993, 1998, 2007, 2010 and 2012.

“The citizens of our state have made it clear time and time again they approve of a higher standard before raising their financial burden,” said WPC President Dann Mead Smith. “Spokane and Pierce County voters have set an example and clear message that we hope will be followed by other local governments.”

This August, voters in the city of Yakima will decide whether to adopt a supermajority requirement to raise taxes.

Additional Resources:

- [Spokesman-Review op-ed - Proposition 2: A Reasonable Taxpayer Protection Policy](#)
- [WPC Citizens' Guide to Spokane's Proposition 2](#)
- [Spokane Journal of Business op-ed - Proposition 2 makes sense for city](#)

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