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Referendum 67 victory for Washington consumers

Consumer protection measure passes 57-43

SEATTLE – Washington voters decided it is time for the insurance industry to play by the rules and approved Referendum 67 in Tuesday’s election. The referendum was approved 57 percent to 43 percent. The margin is expected to grow as additional ballots are counted.

R-67 goes into effect 30 days after election results are certified by the Secretary of State. More than 100 organizations including seniors, firefighters, consumer groups endorsed and worked on the Approve 67 campaign.

“The people of Washington cast their vote in favor of consumer protection,” said Sue Evans, spokesperson for the Approve 67 campaign. “Consumers are the true winners with the passage of R-67.”

State Sen. Brian Weinstein, D-Mercer Island, who wrote the original law that R-67 upholds, was thrilled that voters backed the measure, noting it was already approved by the Legislature, signed by Gov. Chris Gregoire and vigorously supported by Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler.

“Consumers understood that R-67 helps ensure that people with legitimate claims are treated fairly by their insurance company,” Weinstein said. “Insurance companies must honor the policies they sell. That’s fair and voters agreed.”

R-67 is the first referendum measure to be approved by Washington voters since 1968. Voters upheld a law that made it illegal for realty brokers and salespersons to discriminate.

The insurance-industry backed Reject 67 campaign raised \$11.5 million in an attempt to defeat the ballot measure, shattering state records on the most money spent to defeat a ballot measure.

"This campaign was successful because of the incredible effort from citizens around the state of Washington," Evans said. "And we were truly the campaign for consumers."

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