



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SAVE OUR JOBS COALITION DELIVERS SIGNATURES FOR INITIATIVE ENDING STATE'S MONOPOLY ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

■ *I-1082 Injects Competition and Choice into a Failing System and Will Create Washington  
Jobs for Washington Workers*

OLYMPIA—BIAW, the National Federation of Independent Business, Association of Washington Business, Washington Farm Bureau and Washington Food Industry Association and others today delivered over 340,000 signatures to Secretary of State Sam Reed in support of Initiative 1082, the business community's measure to allow private insurers to compete with the state Department of Labor & Industries to offer employers workers' compensation coverage. Supporters of an initiative must gather 241,153 signatures of registered voters in order to qualify for the November ballot.

Initiative 1082 ends the state's monopoly on workers' compensation and injects much needed competition and choice into Washington's failing system. The initiative also eliminates the worker-paid share of workers' comp taxes, leaving workers with more money in their paychecks. Washington is the only state that allows employers to deduct a portion of workers' comp taxes from employee's wages.

"The fact that more than 340,000 voters voluntarily signed petitions to put I-1082 on the ballot is reflective of how voters feel about ending the state's monopoly on workers' comp, creating competition and giving employers a choice," said BIAW President Matthew Clarkson. "Voters clearly understand that choice gives employers more control over their business, which leads to reduced costs, which in turn results in more jobs created," said Clarkson.

"With unemployment at 9.1%, passage of I -1082 is a critical part of our economic recovery," Clarkson added. "I-1082 will create Washington jobs for Washington workers and help our state reach full employment."

I-1082 will bring Washington State in line with the 46 other states that allow competition in the industrial insurance market. Washington's monopoly on workers' comp means employers have no choice but to pay L&I's ever-increasing workers' comp taxes to obtain the industrial insurance coverage they need to protect their workers.

The result has been a costly and inefficient workers' comp system on the verge of insolvency. While workplace injuries have decreased 55 percent in recent years, L&I's costs to manage these

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fewer injured worker claims have increased by more than 80 percent, and injured workers stay off the job more than two times longer in Washington than any other state. Thanks to L&I's inability to efficiently manage the workers' comp system, employers in Washington State have shouldered workers' comp tax increases of 54 percent over the past decade and now pay the second-highest cost per employee in the nation for workers' compensation—and they are facing double-digit workers' comp tax hikes next year.

“Small businesses and their employees simply can't afford to pay higher and higher taxes to prop up L&I's crumbling workers' compensation system,” said NFIB Washington State Director Patrick Connor. “I-1082 gives voters the power to finally free small employers from L&I's failing government-run monopoly.”

Jan Gee, President and CEO of the Washington Food Industry Association agreed, saying, “The grocery industry has struggled for many years to pay the escalating costs of the current, inefficient state monopoly system and provide timely and effective care for their injured workers.” “Initiative 1082 will provide the options necessary to seek better care and lower costs,” said Gee.

“Farmers and ranchers across this state support I-1082 because it provides them with more choices for purchasing workers' comp coverage,” noted Scott Dilley, Washington Farm Bureau Public Policy Analyst. “Our members have been clamoring for fundamental workers' comp reform, and I-1082 is the answer,” said Dilley. “I-1082 will help keep family farms in business so that our state's \$38 billion food and agriculture industry can continue to grow and help this state out of the recession,” he added.

“Our system is choked by unsustainable benefits, poor outcomes, skyrocketing costs, and political gridlock,” said AWB Government Affairs Director Kris Tefft. “Competition has proven itself across the country to improve outcomes and reduce costs. Our members support I-1082 because it offers a fundamental reset for a broken system.”

I-1082 has been endorsed by the Building Industry Association of Washington, National Federation of Independent Business, Association of Washington Business, Washington Food Industry, Washington Farm Bureau, Washington Contract Loggers Association, Washington Lodging Association, Costco, Associated Builders & Contractors of Western Washington, Associated Builders & Contractors Inland Pacific Chapter, Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Washington, National Electrical Contractors Association Puget Sound Chapter, National Electrical Contractors Association SW Washington Chapter, Utility Contractors Association of Washington, Washington Self Insurers Association, Professional Insurance Agents Western Alliance, Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of Washington, TrueBlue, Vigilant, Liberty Mutual, Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Insurance Financial Advisors, Property Casualty Insurers Association of America, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, and Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

For more information on I-1082, visit [www.SAVEOURJOBSSWA.com](http://www.SAVEOURJOBSSWA.com).