NO on 645

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, July 15, 2026
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GOVERNOR FERGUSON AND DOZENS OF COALITION MEMBERS KICK OFF CAMPAIGN TO DEFEAT BRIAN HEYWOOD'S INITIATIVE 645

Vote NO on Cuts to Health Care and Education
Vote NO on Tax Increases on Working Families

SEATTLE, WA – Yesterday, Governor Bob Ferguson and dozens of coalition members kicked off the NO on 645 campaign, which has come together to defeat hedge fund mogul Brian Heywood's Initiative 645, a fiscally irresponsible effort to roll back the Millionaires Tax package will fund core services like education and health care as well as significant tax cuts for working and middle class families and small businesses. It is expected to qualify for the November ballot.

More than 100 advocacy groups and community leaders from across Washington have already joined the NO on 645 campaign coalition. The NO campaign launches with $3 million in early pledges from coalition members, money that will go directly into educating voters about the harms that Heywood's measure would cause.

Yesterday, coalition members joined the Governor to outline the stakes if Initiative 645 were to pass: devastating budget cuts to health care, K-12 education, and childcare, and tax breaks eliminated for small businesses and working families (see more details below on the impacts of I-645). These outcomes would result from Heywood's sloppy and irresponsible drive to eliminate the Millionaires Tax package, an action he would personally benefit from.

In his remarks, Governor Ferguson said: "Today, we are launching this effort to protect childcare and education funding, and ensure working families and small businesses keep more of their money."

The Governor was joined by several speakers who will be directly impacted by repeal of the Millionaires Tax and the passage of I-645. See the TVW recording of the event HERE.

Food Lifeline, a nonprofit focused on feeding people and ending hunger in South Park, hosted the launch event. **Food Lifeline CEO Stephen Davis said:** “The stakes of this initiative could not be any higher today. One in eight individuals that live in Washington are food insecure and one in six children. We believe Initiative 645 would jeopardize the critical investments that help address these challenges and would make it harder for too many of our neighbors to put food on the table.”

Matt Hipp, co-owner of Halcyon Brewing, Broadview Taphouse, & Hill City Taphouse & Bottle Shop, said: “Many small businesses like mine don’t make it off the ground or end up having to shutter their doors. The struggles we face are real. If Initiative 645 passes, it will only make things worse. It takes money out of our pockets, our employees pockets, our customers pockets, and puts it into the hands of the wealthiest one half of one percent of Washingtonians... This was the largest small business tax cut in state history, and it will go away. That's the absolute last thing we need.”

Dr. Soleil Boyd, executive director of Children’s Alliance, a statewide nonpartisan child advocacy organization, said: “If Initiative 645 passes and the Millionaires Tax is repealed, it would blow a $13 billion hole in our state’s budget. It would eliminate funding for early learning programs that have been put on hold or already faced funding cuts. As a former preschool teacher, I know how impactful early learning programs are for kids and families. It’s hard to overstate how devastating these cuts would be to the families that rely on them or to kids whose futures we are short-changing in order to give another tax break to the wealthy few.”

Henry Tan, a recent graduate of UW applying to medical school, said: “I will be one of the 500,000 Washington households who will become newly eligible for the $1500 Working Families Tax Credit while I plan to be in med school. The expansion of the tax credit that I’m going to receive is not going to be affordable if the revenue that pays for it is eliminated by this measure. Do we really want to raise taxes on 500,000 lower income Washington households in order to pay for a massive tax cut for a very few wealthy individuals? I don’t think so.”

Bryan Kirschner, a tech executive in Seattle who works in AI, said: As one of the one half of one percent of Washingtonians who might pay the Millionaires Tax, I am urging you to vote no on Initiative 645... no one should believe Brian Heywood’s false promise that the tax cuts that were included in the Millionaires Tax package can be retained if the revenue that paid for them goes away. So the bottom line truth here is that I-645 will end up raising taxes on small businesses and working families and stripping away billions in funding for education, health care, housing, and other essential services that Washington families rely on to thrive.”

More about Initiative 645:
Initiative 645 is hedge fund manager Brian Heywood’s latest attempt to lower his own taxes, this time by repealing the Millionaires Tax. Passage of his measure would cut $13 billion in funding for core services like health care, K-12 education, and childcare, blowing a huge hole in state budget projections. This would lead to:

- Larger class sizes and fewer one-on-one supports for K-12 students
- Increased health care costs for Washington families
- More cuts to child care, making it more expensive for working families
- Elimination of free school meals for many K-12 students

I-645 also puts numerous critical tax breaks for Washingtonians in serious jeopardy, tax breaks that were adopted by the legislature with the expectation that they would be paid for by the Millionaires Tax. Specifically, I-645 would:

- Increase the B&O tax on most Washington small businesses
- Increase taxes for 500,000 working families by limiting who's eligible for the Working Families Tax Credit
- Increase taxes on over-the counter medicine, diapers, and other essential household items

Earlier this month, members of the coalition released results of a poll showing that **only 38 percent of Washington voters support passing Initiative 645, with 57 percent saying they would vote 'No'** – a 19 point margin against the measure**.** Conventional wisdom is that initiatives need to start above 60% in polling, and Initiative 645 starts 22 points under that initiatives need to start above 60% in polling, and Initiative 645 starts 22 points under that benchmark.

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