



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 31, 2024**

**CADF SENDS DEMAND LETTER TO LEGISLATIVE LEADERS  
REGARDING FAILURE TO HEAR, VOTE ON INITIATIVES**

*CADF represents a couple who signed initiative petitions and support changes to the law after their daughter was killed by a car thief that the police had been unable to lawfully pursue*

**Olympia, Washington — January 31, 2024** — This morning, the Citizen Action Defense Fund (CADF), sent a demand letter to the leadership of the Washington State Legislature and is seeking to enforce a provision of the state constitution that would require legislators to prioritize six initiatives to the legislature over all other measures outside of appropriation bills.

CADF represents John and Amber Goldade, who tragically lost their daughter to a driver of a stolen truck. The couple learned that the police had followed the driver two weeks earlier but were forced to cease pursuit due to legal changes. The couple signed a petition for an initiative measure that would repeal the law on police pursuits as well as five other initiative petitions. All of the initiatives were sent to the legislature, and most have been pending since earlier this month but none of the initiatives have received a single hearing despite multiple efforts. For example, the House of Representatives voted multiple times against efforts to refer the measures to committee with the requirement that they be heard promptly consistent with the constitutional mandate.

“The language in the state constitution is clear: initiative measures have to take precedence over all other measures outside of appropriation bills,” said Jackson Maynard, Executive Director and Counsel for CADF. “It is outrageous that my clients have to wait while legislative committees hear hundreds of other bills that don’t have special constitutional priority. It is fundamentally wrong, and if the legislature won’t follow the constitution, then my clients will consider every legal option.”

CADF sent the demand letter on behalf of the couple to Lt. Governor Denny Heck, Speaker Laurie Jenkins, Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig, Senate Minority Leader John Braun, House Minority Leader Drew Stokesbary. The letter requests that the legislature either hear the bills in committee or give the bills a floor vote. The letter also argues that the Legislature’s refusal to follow the law violates the couple’s right to petition their government.

“The state supreme court has been diligent in the recent past to defend the ‘first power reserved by the people’ to legislate by initiative,” Maynard continued. “In 2018, it struck down a similar violation of the same constitutional section when the legislature tried to skirt the rules. The legislature should take note of this and ensure that the constitutional process for initiatives is followed without delay.”

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