



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2026

**CITIZEN ACTION DEFENSE FUND DEMANDS LEGISLATURE COMPLY WITH
STATE CONSTITUTION TO HOLD HEARINGS ON CITIZEN INITIATIVES**

Olympia, Washington — Citizen Action Defense Fund (CADF) sent a formal demand letter to Senate Majority Leader Jamie Pedersen and House Speaker Laurie Jenkins asserting that the Washington State Legislature is violating the state constitution by refusing to hold hearings or votes on citizen initiatives that are currently pending before the Legislature: Initiatives IL26-001 and IL26-638.

Article II, Section 1(a) of the Washington Constitution requires initiative measures to “take precedence over all other measures in the legislature except appropriation bills” and to be either enacted or rejected without change. Despite this clear constitutional directive, legislative leadership recently indicated they have no plans to schedule hearings on the initiatives.

“For more than a century, Washington’s constitution has treated the people’s initiative power as a fundamental check on government,” said Jackson Maynard, CADF Executive Director. “The Legislature does not get to ignore laws proposed by hundreds of thousands of voters simply because they are politically inconvenient. The Constitution requires that these initiatives be given priority and be acted upon.”

Nearly half a million Washingtonians signed petitions to support Initiatives IL26-001 and IL26-638. CADF notes that for decades, every initiative submitted to the legislature received hearings, and in 2024, following similar public pressure, the legislature ultimately heard and passed several measures after initially resisting.

The letter cites multiple Washington State Supreme Court decisions affirming that the initiative process must be liberally construed to protect citizens’ rights and that courts have a duty to prevent legislative encroachment on this constitutional power.

“The people are not a suggestion box for lawmakers,” Maynard added. “They are sovereign under our Constitution where it states that ‘all power is inherent in the people.’ The legislature should be helping to protect the right to initiative, not obstruct it.”

CADF has formally requested that legislative leadership either schedule hearings on the initiatives or bring them to a floor vote - as required by law. The organization also warned that it is prepared to pursue all available legal options should the Legislature continue to disregard its constitutional obligations.

A response from legislative leadership has been requested outlining their legal justification for refusing to act on the initiatives.

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