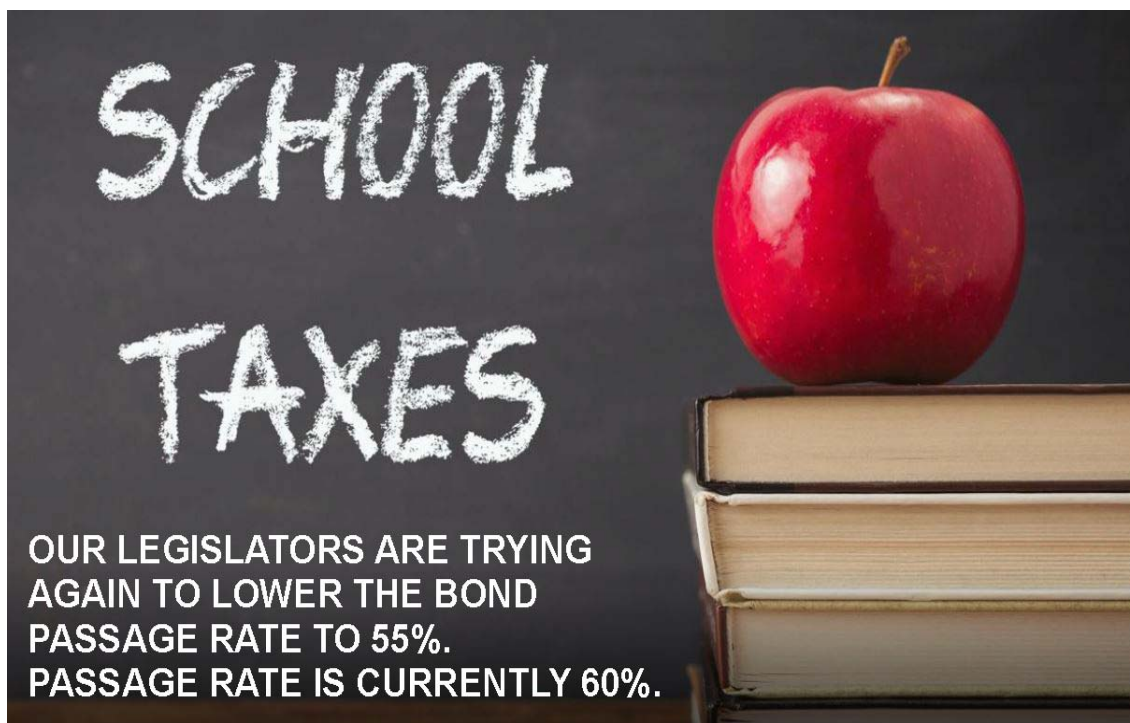


Watch out for higher school taxes!

(And yes, "renewal levies" do increase our property taxes)



Washington State Democratic Senator Emily Randall is pushing legislation this session in efforts to reduce the school bond passage rate from current 60% down to 55%.

It is time to write both of your state senators and state representatives and tell them NO, do not lower the school bond passage threshold to 55%.

Senate Bill 5386 and Senate Joint Resolution 8204 are being voted on the legislative session. The bill is to lower the requirement of passing bonds from 60% down to 55%. A joint resolution is also needed in order to change our State Constitution.

To change our State Constitution all voters in Washington State will be able to vote on any changes to the current 60% approval threshold needed to pass bonds, in this case we are talking about school bonds. If the Senate and House chambers both pass these bill by two-thirds majority then the voters in our state must pass the change to our Constitution by a mere 50% simple majority.

In the past 73 or so years, efforts by the Senate and House to change the bond passage voting threshold have all failed. There are 98 State Senators and 49 State House Representatives.

It is a straightforward process to make this change. Our legislators have tried twice in the past three sessions to change the passage rate to 50%. That didn't work so they also suggested 55%. That also did not pass. This time they are just asking for a change to 55%. "If" the Senate passes their bill and joint resolution then the House takes up the same bills and goes through the same process. Both the Senate and House must pass the same bills of course and the legislation is dead in the water. The Senate has already had their public hearing on SB 5368, which happened on February 8th. The next opportunity to comment on these bills is when they make it to public hearings in the house.

It is a good idea to go online, contact our State Senators and House Representatives, and gives them feedback about how you feel about these bills. The district's legislators are state senator Emily Randall (D) (who sponsored this Senate Bill) and state representatives Jesse Young (R-pos. 1) and Michelle Caldier (R-pos. 2). They typically vote not against any legislation that is intended to reduce the bond passage threshold below the current 60% voter approval rate.

Here is the link to TVW that explains how to find schedules of bills and when you can comment on them if they are taking testimony: <https://www.tvw.org/how-to-watch-tvw/>

Now is the time to contact our legislators and give them feedback. On the fill in form, you will put in your name and location and your legislators names will pop up. If you put in the Senate Bill, House Bill numbers you will be taken to those bills and be able to give your comment on how you approve of or oppose these bills.

Here is the link to access and comment on Senate Bill 5386:
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/pbc/bill/5386>

Here is the link to access and comment on Senate Joint Resolution SJR 8204
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=8204&Year=2021&Initiative=false>

If you want to give live testimony here is the link to TVW that explains how to find schedules of bills and when you can comment on them if they are taking testimony:
<https://www.tvw.org/how-to-watch-tvw/>

Here are some instructions on how to comment when committees are giving testimony:
<https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Testify.aspx>

The following article effectively refutes the continuing false narrative put out by South Kitsap School District (SKSD) and their political action committee, South Kitsap School Supports (SSKS). When they say "passing this "renewal levy won't increase your taxes" know that it is a lie, a more polite label would be a missive. Such a major missive must be checked and the article below fully refutes this continuing false claim made by SKSD and SSKS. This video clarifies how bonds do raise your taxes:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWbyNQtoyMw>

Now would be a good time to write to our legislators regarding opposition or support for the current legislation to lower the bond passage voter rate from 60% down to 55%.

The following email addresses can be selected and pasted into one email each for either senators or representatives.

A short statement such as this would be good:

"Please VOTE NO on changing the current super majority requirement of 60% to pass school bonds down to a simple majority vote of 55%. The 60% passage requirement was put into our constitution for a very good reason.

60% has worked for us for over 70 years in protecting all of us property owners from school district's 'over-reaching' and asking for more bond money than the need. Passage of legislation to lower this 60% requirement will result in even more excessive taxation and spending by our local school districts".

Washington State Senator's Email Addresses:

andy.billig@leg.wa.gov; john.braun@leg.wa.gov; sharon.brown@leg.wa.gov; reuben.carlyle@leg.wa.gov; annette.cleveland@leg.wa.gov; steve.conway@leg.wa.gov; j.darneille@leg.wa.gov; mona.das@leg.wa.gov; manka.dhingra@leg.wa.gov; perry.dozier@leg.wa.gov; doug.ericksen@leg.wa.gov; phil.fortunato@leg.wa.gov; david.froct@leg.wa.gov; chris.gildon@leg.wa.gov; bob.hasegawa@leg.wa.gov; brad.hawkins@leg.wa.gov; steve.hobbs@leg.wa.gov; jeff.holy@leg.wa.gov; jim.honeyford@leg.wa.gov; sam.hunt@leg.wa.gov; karen.keiser@leg.wa.gov; curtis.king@leg.wa.gov; patty.kuderer@leg.wa.gov; marko.liias@leg.wa.gov; liz.lovelett@leg.wa.gov; jim.mccune@leg.wa.gov; mark.mullet@leg.wa.gov; ron.muzzall@leg.wa.gov; joe.nguyen@leg.wa.gov; twina.nobles@leg.wa.gov; mike.padden@leg.wa.gov; jamie.pedersen@leg.wa.gov; emily.randall@leg.wa.gov; ann.rivers@leg.wa.gov; june.robinson@leg.wa.gov; christine.rolfes@leg.wa.gov; Rebecca.Saldana@Leg.wa.gov; jesse.salomon@leg.wa.gov; mark.schoesler@leg.wa.gov; timothy.sheldon@leg.wa.gov; shelly.short@leg.wa.gov; derek.stanford@leg.wa.gov; kevin.vandewege@leg.wa.gov; keith.wagoner@leg.wa.gov; judy.warnick@leg.wa.gov; lisa.wellman@leg.wa.gov; claire.wilson@leg.wa.gov; jeff.wilson@leg.wa.gov; lynda.wilson@leg.wa.gov; ltgov@ltgov.wa.gov;

Washington State Representatives Email Addresses:

peter.abbarno@leg.wa.gov; andrew.barkis@leg.wa.gov; jessica.bateman@leg.wa.gov; april.berg@leg.wa.gov; steve.bergquist@leg.wa.gov; liz.berry@leg.wa.gov; matt.boehnke@leg.wa.gov; dan.bronoske@leg.wa.gov; michelle.caldier@leg.wa.gov; lisa.callan@leg.wa.gov; kelly.chambers@leg.wa.gov; bruce.chandler@leg.wa.gov; mike.chapman@leg.wa.gov; rob.chase@leg.wa.gov; frank.chopp@leg.wa.gov; eileen.cody@leg.wa.gov; chris.corry@leg.wa.gov; lauren.davis@leg.wa.gov; tom.dent@leg.wa.gov; laurie.dolan@leg.wa.gov; davina.duerr@leg.wa.gov; jeremie.dufault@leg.wa.gov; mary.dye@leg.wa.gov; debra.entenman@leg.wa.gov; carolyn.eslick@leg.wa.gov; jake.fey@leg.wa.gov; joe.fitzgibbon@leg.wa.gov; noel.frame@leg.wa.gov; greg.gilday@leg.wa.gov; keith.goehner@leg.wa.gov; roger.goodman@leg.wa.gov; jenny.graham@leg.wa.gov; mia.gregerson@leg.wa.gov; dan.griffey@leg.wa.gov; david.hackney@leg.wa.gov; drew.hansen@leg.wa.gov; paul.harris@leg.wa.gov; kirsten.harris-talley@leg.wa.gov; larry.hoff@leg.wa.gov; cyndy.jacobsen@leg.wa.gov; laurie.jenkins@leg.wa.gov; jesse.johnson@leg.wa.gov; steve.kirby@leg.wa.gov; mark.klicker@leg.wa.gov; brad.klippert@leg.wa.gov; shelley.kloba@leg.wa.gov; vicki.kraft@leg.wa.gov; joel.kretz@leg.wa.gov; mari.leavitt@leg.wa.gov; debra.lekanoff@leg.wa.gov; john.lovick@leg.wa.gov; drew.macewen@leg.wa.gov; nicole.macri@leg.wa.gov; jacquelin.maycumber@leg.wa.gov; bob.mccaslin@leg.wa.gov; joel.mcentire@leg.wa.gov; melanie.morgan@leg.wa.gov; gina.mosbrucker@leg.wa.gov; ed.orcutt@leg.wa.gov; tim.ormsby@leg.wa.gov; lillian.ortiz-self@leg.wa.gov; tina.orwall@leg.wa.gov; dave.paul@leg.wa.gov; strom.peterson@leg.wa.gov; gerry.pollet@leg.wa.gov; alex.ramel@leg.wa.gov; bill.ramos@leg.wa.gov; marcus.riccelli@leg.wa.gov; eric.robertson@leg.wa.gov; skyler.rude@leg.wa.gov; alicia.rule@leg.wa.gov; cindy.ryu@leg.wa.gov; sharontomiko.santos@leg.wa.gov; joe.schmick@leg.wa.gov; mike.sells@leg.wa.gov; tana.senn@leg.wa.gov; sharon.shewmake@leg.wa.gov; tarra.simmons@leg.wa.gov; vandana.slatter@leg.wa.gov; larry.springer@leg.wa.gov; mike.steele@leg.wa.gov; drew.stokesbary@leg.wa.gov; monica.stonier@leg.wa.gov; pat.sullivan@leg.wa.gov; robert.sutherland@leg.wa.gov; jamila.taylor@leg.wa.gov; my-linh.thai@leg.wa.gov; steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov; javier.valdez@leg.wa.gov; brandon.vick@leg.wa.gov; mike.volz@leg.wa.gov; amy.walen@leg.wa.gov; jim.walsh@leg.wa.gov; emily.wicks@leg.wa.gov; jt.wilcox@leg.wa.gov; sharon.wylie@leg.wa.gov; alex.ybarra@leg.wa.gov; jesse.young@leg.wa.gov

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Yes, No Tax Increase Bonds Increase Your Taxes



Mike McShane Contributor ①

Education

I study K-12 education, including entrepreneurship and school choice.



Its spring election season and across the country citizens will be heading to the polls to vote in municipal elections. In my community, in addition to trying to narrow down a field of mayoral candidates and electing school board members, we will also vote on what is being billed as a “no tax increase bond” issuance for our local school district.

Like many terms in politics, putting “no tax increase” in front of “bonds” is supposed to blunt the opposition to new taxes. But let’s be clear, there is no special category of bonds that school districts issue that doesn’t increase your taxes. No tax increase bonds increase your taxes.

How? School districts regularly issue bonds to finance capital improvements like building new buildings or renovating existing infrastructure. Taxpayers pay off those bonds over time, usually via an increase to their property taxes. Bonds are issued for a specific period, and when they are paid off, taxpayers tax bills go down.

Enter no tax increase bonds. When a school district finds itself on the tail end of a bond payoff period, it realizes that it can borrow more money without taxpayers paying more than they currently are. They simply tack more bonds on and add more years of payment. Everyone’s taxes stay the same and the school district gets more money. (Here is a [great video](#) walking through how it works.)

But do you see the problem? No tax increase bonds actually do increase your taxes. If the district didn’t issue new bonds after paying off the existing ones, your tax bill would go down. But it doesn’t. That is a tax increase.

I understand that this might seem like a trivial matter, but it is a problem, for three reasons.

First, it is not honest. Honesty is in short supply in contemporary politics, but our school leaders should be better than this. If they want more money for a new high school, a new science lab or a new football stadium, they have an obligation to be transparent with the people they are asking to pay for it. Playing a shell game or deflecting the true cost erodes the trust between the community and schools.

Second, it thwarts oversight, transparency and accountability. School district bond elections have the potential to be some of the clearest and most transparent elections we have in America. The district usually has a well-articulated plan for that they are hoping to do, and community members get to decide whether it is worth it. When I see a proposed bond issuance or tax levy increase, I look up the enrollment of the district. Is it growing? Do they need a new building? I look with my own eyes at the plans for new facilities and make a judgment as to whether they are appropriate or extravagant. I can even look at existing debt loads and tax levy rates and compare them to neighboring districts. Are we spending more than them, less than them or about the same? As a result, I can make an informed decision. But when districts are simply tacking on more years of spending, they often use general language about the allowable uses of these dollars. There are no clear plans. It is hiding the ball.

Finally, it undermines the fundamental truth that the things that we want cost money. If we want to build a new high school in our community, it is going to cost money. We need to pay for it out of our taxes. If it is worth it, we should do it, but we should do so knowing that we are going to be paying for it. By pretending like we're getting something for nothing, folks can start to think that we don't have to pay for the things that we want. That is wrong. We should never forget that we have to pay for what we want.

The Chinese philosopher Confucius argues in *The Analects*, "If names be not correct,

language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success.” This idea is so important, he argues, that the first order of a new leader is to “rectify names.” That is, to make sure that things are called what they are supposed to be called.

It is important for us to debate whether new spending is worth it. Muddying the water with terms like “no tax increase” makes that very hard to do. That’s a shame, and without rectifying the name, the affairs of schooling cannot be carried on to success.

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