

Coalition for Open Government
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COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT POSITION ON AMENDMENTS TO INIT. 276

The Coalition for Open Government has called this press conference to begin a program of explaining to this newly assembled 43rd Washington State Legislature, the background and philosophy that went into Initiative 276.

The Coalition, made up of a number of different groups and organizations, supports the principles incorporated in this full disclosure legislation. Fully disclosing campaign contributions and expenditures, showing the effects of professional lobbying on the law-making process, indicating the relationship between official's personal financial affairs and his public financial affairs, and opening up government operations to public view with open records, are all fundamental objectives supported by COG and also by more than 72% of the people in our state during the past general election.

This desire for full disclosure and openness in government is not just the whimsey of a few "do-gooders" but has become a clear mandate by the people of the state. Any attempt to tamper with these basic principles by members of this legislature will only increase the lack of confidence people now have in the legislative process.

In order to do the job that was necessary Initiative 276 became a very lengthy and complex piece of legislation. However, it was also one of the most well considered pieces of legislation ever submitted to the voters of this state. No matter how thoroughly drafted and considered, further study may disclose the desirability of some amendments. Any changes or amendments that would improve the workability or productiveness of this legislation would be thoroughly supported by COG.

Initiative 276 was not drafted out of spite, but was developed with a sincere desire to help clear the air of the suspicion and doubt that has been clouding the atmosphere around public offices. The Coalition for Open Government feel that much of the doubt and innuendo will be reduced if full disclosure of campaign financing and operations is open and available to the public, whether they choose to use it or not. Proper implementation of Initiative 276 will help sanitize public office and also help to restore confidence and respect with most citizens coming forth to offer themselves for public service.

Now that this citizen desire for open government has become law, it becomes incumbent upon those sworn to uphold the law to make this an effective and workable part of our government.