



Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Endorsement Approve Referendum 71

What is Referendum 71?

In 2009, the Washington State legislature passed Senate Bill 5688 to ensure that all Washington families are treated equally with the same protections, the same rights and the same obligations as their neighbors. Under this law, registered domestic partners (same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples where at least one partner is over age 62), and married couples, are treated equally under state law throughout Washington.

What is included in the new law?

- ✓ Death benefits for the partners of police and firefighters killed in the line of duty,
- ✓ Pension benefits for the partners of teachers and other public employees,
- ✓ The right to use sick leave to care for a seriously ill partner,
- ✓ The right to workers' compensation benefits if a partner is killed in the course of employment,
- ✓ The right to receive unemployment benefits if an employee must leave a job to care for a seriously ill partner,
- ✓ The right to adopt a partner's child without paying for a home study.

Opponents of the domestic partnership law are seeking to repeal it. Referendum 71 will ask voters whether the law should be approved or rejected. A vote to "APPROVE" keeps the law so that all families will have these protections in all parts of the state.

Statement of support:

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance works to expand the ability for everyone in Washington to live in a safe, affordable and decent home. Fair and equal treatment of all families is critical for Washington to realize this goal. Civil rights protections and fair housing laws provide fundamental protections that ensure families and individuals at risk of discrimination have tools to address barriers to housing that are based on prejudice. Washington's domestic partnership laws have addressed the economic disadvantages families are put in when they are not allowed to marry. Greater economic security is one of the most important benefits that a committed relationship recognized by the State (through marriage or domestic partnership registration) offers a family. In all economic climates, but in the current market especially, any crack in a family's economic security can threaten a family's home. When a loved one dies in the line of duty it is clear that death benefits and/or employment benefits will be critical to the remaining family's ability to remain in their home. This is just one economic security issue addressed by SB 5688: the bill that Referendum 71 is asking voters to reject.

In order to realize the goal of all families in Washington living in safe, affordable and decent homes, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance asks you to approve R-71.

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