



NEWS RELEASE

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JUDGE REJECTS LABOR’S SWEEPING CHANGES TO I-1082 BALLOT TITLE **■ Labor Unions Control the Legislature, But They Don’t Control the Courts**

OLYMPIA—BIAW’s initiative (I-1082) allowing private insurers to compete with the state Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) to offer employers workers’ compensation coverage today cleared the ballot title challenge hurdle and BIAW has already begun printing petitions for signature gathering.

BIAW had to battle labor union boss Rick Bender in court after he filed a challenge to the ballot title language drafted by the state Attorney General’s Office. Bender sought to amend the language to, among other things, include a prejudicial statement that I-1082 will “authorize” private insurers “to administer claims for benefits without involvement by the department of labor and industries.”

The statement implies the lack of “involvement” by L&I would release private insurers from complying with laws governing claims management, thus compromising the claims management of injured workers covered by private insurers. I-1082 will confer private insurers the same rights and liabilities of L&I—that is private insurers and L&I will be bound by the same rules, regulations and laws pertaining to the treatment and return to work of injured workers.

“The ballot title language drafted by the state was simple, straightforward and complied with the law, it was concise and not prejudicial to either side,” said BIAW Attorney Timothy Harris. “Bender asked for sweeping changes to the ballot title—language that would have confused voters and possibly persuaded them to reject the initiative.”

Thurston County Superior Court Judge Thomas McPhee agreed with BIAW’s defense of the language, rejecting Bender’s arguments and changing just two words of the language to clarify the initiative and improve the language of the I-1082 ballot title.

For more information on I-1082, visit www.SAVEOURJOBSSWA.com.

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Known as the “champion of affordable housing,” the Building Industry Association of Washington is the largest trade association in Washington State, representing over 250,000 families and more than 11,000 member companies involved in the homebuilding business.