

**Resolution passed by delegates to the Washington State Labor Council's
2003 Convention August 23, 2003**

IN OPPOSITION TO INITIATIVE 841

Resolution #7

WHEREAS, 50,000 Washington workers a year suffer from work-related, preventable injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, low back strain and tendonitis; and

WHEREAS, these injuries account for nearly one-third of all workers' compensation claims in our state, and account for 46% of all state workers' compensation claims costs; and

WHEREAS, a cost-benefit analysis of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries ergonomics rule on work-related musculoskeletal injuries found that the cost savings of implementation will save Washington businesses nearly \$340 million per year at a cost for full compliance of nearly \$80 million, with a cost-benefit ratio of more than four-to-one; and

WHEREAS, certain business interests have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for paid signature gatherers to place Initiative 841 on the fall statewide ballot to repeal this important workplace safety rule, and news reports indicate these mercenary petitioners routinely lied about the rule and its impact in order to convince people to sign; and

WHEREAS, the ergonomics rule has had the longest phase-in period of any workplace safety rule ever adopted in our state, with special consideration allowed for small business to take up to six years to comply; and

WHEREAS, the National Academy of Science and the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health have both issued scientific reports concluding that ergonomics programs and interventions in the workplace can significantly reduce musculoskeletal injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Independent Blue Ribbon Panel, which included representatives from the business community, reviewed the rule in 2002 and found that the rule's requirements are understandable, that enforcement policies are fair and consistent, that effective education materials are widely available, and that demonstration projects have been successful; and

WHEREAS, the new rule is targeted at real hazards where the most injuries occur, and does not require any action by nearly 50% of employers that have no employees in hazardous jobs; and

WHEREAS, common sense principles of prevention will avoid thousands of

painful and debilitating injuries to workers in our state and will make hundreds of workplaces and jobs safer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council go on record as opposed to Initiative 841; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council will assist in the effort to defeat Initiative 841; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that affiliates of the Washington State Labor Council are urged to make contributions to the campaign to defeat I-841 (No on I-841), and also are urged to reach out to individuals and companies who provide services to organized labor and to reach out to allies of organized labor to contribute to the No on I-841 campaign.

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