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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Yes on I-135 campaign is sending out this press release to communicate our frustration navigating unclear policies and processes around citizens' initiatives. There needs to be a clear way to navigate this process, especially for those who do not have the resources to keep a lawyer on retainer. We also want to share what we have learned with the general public.

A terminal date is a date set by King County Elections that is set for *after* signatures have been submitted to the City Clerk and acts as a deadline for the withdrawal of signatures and the submission of new signatures. Our original terminal date for the first round of signature gathering was July 5, 2022. Given that the signers of the most recently submitted petition on Aug. 11th would be unable to effectively withdraw their signatures by July 5th, we awaited a new terminal date.

Last Thursday, August 11th, we submitted 7,543 carefully vetted, legible, Seattle voters' signatures to the Seattle City Clerk. We need 5,033 eligible signatures to make the ballot. Throughout this past weekend, we additionally picked-up more than one thousand signatures throughout the city from our volunteers and supporters. We did so because it was before a terminal date was set for the newest submission of signatures.

Unfortunately, we were told late Friday that there will **not** be a new terminal date set for the 20-day signature gathering window we have been operating under. Rather, that the 20-day signature gathering window is a continuation of the last terminal date. This is contrary to (a) the City Clerk's confirmation; (b) our independent research; and (c) the protocol of our first submission.

At best, it seems like we are in an unclear area of the law. The Revised Code of Washington states that "Wherever in this title petitions are required to be signed and filed, the following rules shall govern the sufficiency thereof: ...Additional pages of one or more signatures may be added to the petition by filing the same with the appropriate filing officer prior to such terminal date."

RCW 35.21.005(4). Aside from the Seattle City Charter stating, “an additional twenty (20) days shall be allowed them in which to complete such petition to the required percentage,” there is no discussion within the Charter regarding this issue.”

To ensure we followed the correct protocol, we requested confirmation of this language from the City Clerk on July 25th, with the response being:

*Good afternoon and thank you for your inquiry. That is correct, the supplemental submission follows the **same protocols** of the initial submission, as detailed in the Seattle Petition Guide, [Step 6](#)...(bolded added)*

With this confirmation, we proceeded to collect signatures until the issuance of the new terminal date.

We publicize this not to call out any one person, but to shed light on the intricacies of this process and how deeply inaccessible they are. We don't have the money to keep a lawyer on retainer throughout this process. While we don't expect legal advice from City Departments, we do believe they should be forthcoming with information at their disposal. Websites detailing processes for citizens to effect change in the law should be clearly laid out for everyone. If there was no second terminal date, that should be listed on the website or confirmed by the City Clerk. If there are citizens who signed the initiative, but have changed their mind and want to remove their signature, it doesn't seem like they have the opportunity to do that under the 20-day signature gathering window.

More than one thousand Seattle voters, including 250 who signed before the expiration but didn't get them to us before the appointment, took time over the past few days, to sign their names on a petition they believed would lead to increased permanently affordable housing in Seattle. These voices and their signatures and are now at risk of not being counted due to a deeply un navigable process.