Resolution Supporting Whatcom County Initiative 2026-18

Whereas approximately 70 percent of current Western Washington University students live off campus[1] and;

Whereas more than one-third of Western Washington University students surveyed in the latest NCHA report indicated that they would consider leaving school due to a lack of safe or affordable housing[2];

Whereas Bellingham's housing expenses are approximately 35 percent higher than the national average[3], and rising costs in safe housing disproportionality affect financially insecure students by increasing barriers to housing security and academic success;

Whereas on average, paid algorithmic pricing tools artificially inflate national housing costs by $70 a month, ultimately exacerbating rental exploitation among Western Washington University students[4];

Whereas Initiative 2026-18 will ban the use of paid algorithmic services to analyze public and private data to increase housing costs, and will prohibit two or more landlords from establishing rental prices[5];

Whereas Initiative 2026-18 establishes civil and criminal penalties for landlords and property managers who engage in unlawful rental price-fixing practices, creates investigatory mechanisms, and protects tenants from retaliation when reporting misconduct[6];

Whereas these protections are intended to promote a more competitive and transparent housing market, which benefits and protects those Western Washington University students who rely on off campus housing;

Whereas AI driven algorithm bans have already been implemented in places like King County and 11 other jurisdictions[7], increasing the urgency for our community to join in these protections to build a fairer and more affordable Washington;

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[1] @USNews. "Western Washington University." 2026.. https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/western-washington-3802/student-life

[2] Western Washington University, *NCHA-IIIb Spring 2026 Western Washington University Institutional Data Report* (Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 2026) [p.106].

[3] PayScale, "Cost of Living in Bellingham, WA," accessed October 25, 2026, https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Washington-Bellingham.

[4] Mittendorf, Robert. "Bellingham Residents Voting on Mayor's Pay, Rental Price-Fixing Measures." Bellingham Herald, October 22, 2026. https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/politics-government/election/local-election/article317723321.html.

[5] Whatcom County. "A Resolution of the CITY of Bellingham Deferring Initiative NO. 2026-01, Which Prohibits Algorithmic Price Fixing in the Rental Market, to the Voters." July 2026. Whatcomcounty.us.

[6] "Ban Rental Price Fixing Whatcom County 2026 Petition." 2026. Whatcomcounty.Us. 2026.

[7] King County "Council approves Mosqueda legislation outlawing rent price fixing in King County, becoming 11th jurisdiction in nation to regulate such collusion Council approves Mosqueda legislation outlawing rent price fixing in King County, becoming 11th jurisdiction in nation to regulate such collusion" *KingCounty.gov*, (2025)

Approved: ASWWU Senate: Motion #SEN-26-F-15, 10/28/26

ASWWU Executive Board: Motion#ASB-26-F-14, 10/29/26

Resolution Supporting Whatcom County Initiative 2026-18

Whereas ASWWU finds it critical that we support efforts that improve housing affordability and tenant protections to promote equitable access to higher education and encourage retention among the population who live off campus;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved **that the Associated Students of Western Washington University:**

1. Adopts this resolution to express its official support for Initiative 2026-18
2. Urge Western Washington University Students to vote YES on Initiative 2026-18 in the November 3rd, 2026 General Election.