

UPDATE: WA DOMESTIC PARTNER LAW ON HOLD

The effective date of Washington State's "Everything but Marriage Act" (SB 5688, "the Act") has been delayed. Sponsors of Referendum 71, seeking a public vote to repeal the Act, turned in an estimated 138,000 signatures on Saturday. This is more than the 120,577 needed to qualify for the November ballot.

The Secretary of State is conducting a signature check to confirm enough valid signatures were obtained to place the issue to a public vote. This certification process will likely take a number of weeks. Results may not be available until the end of August, possibly September.

The Act **will not take effect** until after the Secretary of State completes the signature check. Further, if enough valid signatures were collected, the effective date will be delayed pending a public vote to repeal the Act in November.

What does this mean for our insurance contracts written in Washington?

Because the Act did not go into effect on July 26, insurance contracts and carriers are **not** required to provide equal treatment between registered domestic partners and spouses. Therefore, no changes are required to a group health plan or other insurance contract written in Washington State, pending the outcome of the signature check. Further, if the referendum was successful, these changes may or may not come into effect pending the results of the November election.

We will keep you updated as developments continue to unfold.

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