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Advisory board appointed to assist insurance fraud unit

Olympia, Wash. – Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler has appointed a special advisory board to monitor the effectiveness of the agency's newly launched campaign against organized insurance fraud in Washington.

Earlier this year, the agency's eight-member special investigations unit began operations following the 2006 Washington State Legislature's establishment of a dedicated fraud unit to investigate and prosecute organized insurance fraud. Specifically, the newly appointed advisory board is charged with advising the insurance commissioner and the legislature on the unit's effectiveness, funding, use of resources, staffing and other issues in the battle against insurance fraud.

The National Insurance Crime Bureau estimates that fraud adds \$200 to \$300 to the typical Washington household's annual insurance costs. A cost, Kreidler pointed out, that is ultimately paid by law-abiding insurance policyholders.

The new advisory board includes representatives from the insurance industry, consumers, the National Insurance Crime Bureau, county prosecutors and law enforcement.

Members include:

- Bill Baldwin, Insurance Brokers & Agents of the West (industry), three-year term.
- Sheriff Steve Boyer, Kitsap County Sheriff's Office (law enforcement), four-year term.
- Kent Davis, Law Firm Technology Specialists (consumer), one-year term.
- Glenn Kaleta, Safeco Insurance Company (industry), four-year term.
- Bill LaBorde, Washington State Public Interest Research Group (consumer), three-year term.

- David Lyons, State Farm Insurance Company (industry), two-year term.
- Dana McDonald, National Insurance Crime Bureau, two-year term.
- Janet Paulson, Pemco Insurance Company (industry), three-year term.
- John Tolton, The Regence Group (industry), one-year term.
- Joe Wheeler, Thurston County Prosecutor's Office (prosecutor), four-year-term.

The advisory board will meet at least twice a year, with the first meeting scheduled for June.

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