

High Risk Offender Housing Resolution

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3 **WHEREAS**, of June 30th, 2007 the Department of Corrections (DOC) has cut off
4 housing funding assistance for “High Risk” offenders including sex offenders, thereby
5 jeopardizing public safety throughout Washington state.

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7 **WHEREAS**, the reasoning for discontinuing this funding was a legal interpretation of
8 financial liability and the passage of ESSB 6157 to take care of future community
9 network re-entry needs.

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11 **WHEREAS**, the purpose of this legislation is to improve public safety by better
12 preparing offenders while incarcerated, and continuing those efforts for those recently
13 released, for successful, productive, and healthy transition to their communities.

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15 **WHEREAS**, the Community Trade and Economic Development Department is required
16 to establish a housing assistance program, not to exceed 12 months, for offenders
17 reentering the community who are in need of housing and set up a community
18 transition coordination network grant program which will award grants to counties or
19 groups of counties for implementing coordinated reentry efforts for offenders returning
20 to community from prison or jails.

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22 **WHEREAS**, only two pilot counties out of 39 will be provided grants to eligible
23 organization to provide housing assistance to offenders reentering the community who
24 are in need of housing and that they must be operated in collaboration with a
25 Community Justice Center.

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27 **WHEREAS**, there are many counties throughout Washington state which don’t have or
28 qualify for a Community Justice Center.

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30 **WHEREAS**, there are some counties which have successful programs designed to safely
31 house sex offenders and other high risk offenders released from DOC facilities at a
32 fraction of the cost for incarcerating repeat offenders and they will not be funded in
33 spite of ESSB 6157.

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35 **WHEREAS**, only two of the 39 counties will receive grant awards, the other 37 counties
36 will receive no assistance and it will take years for all this to be implemented, creating a
37 public safety issue throughout Washington State.

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39 **WHEREAS**, ESSB 6157 addresses the issue of liability by exempting landlords, state and
40 local entities that provide housing assistance to offenders from civil damages arising
41 from criminal conduct of an offender solely due to the placement of the offender in
42 housing.

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44 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, until such programs are implemented as
45 legislated and in the interest of public safety throughout our state, the Washington State
46 Democratic Central Committee requests Governor Christine Gregoire to re-confer with
47 the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and the Attorney General's office to
48 consider reinstating previous 90 day housing assistance vouchers for "High Risk"
49 offenders immediately.
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52 Submitted by the Whatcom County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic
53 Central Committee for consideration at its September 29, 2007 meeting in Wenatchee.
54 (Date Submitted 9/12/2007)
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56 The WSDCC Resolutions Committee "RECOMMENDED A PASS" on this resolution at
57 its September 29, 2007 meeting in Wenatchee.
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59 The WSDCC "PASSED" this resolution at its September 29, 2007 meeting in Wenatchee.