

Abolishing a Hidden Poll Tax

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3 **WHEREAS** Washington State has the most restrictions on voting by ex-felons in the
4 nation, worse than any other state;

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6 **WHEREAS** ex-felons in Washington State cannot vote until after they have paid in full
7 all restitution and fees, resulting in more than 15,000 citizens being disenfranchised
8 every year;

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10 **WHEREAS** hundreds of felons who have paid their debts do not get their voting rights
11 restored due to inadvertent bureaucratic errors;

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13 **WHEREAS** the American Correctional Association (ACA) has called for ending the
14 practice of withholding voting rights from parolees and people who have completed
15 their prison terms;

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17 **WHEREAS** current laws serve no correctional purpose and can contribute to recidivism
18 by excluding ex-felons and their families from the civic mainstream;

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20 **WHEREAS** requiring payment of all legal financial obligations (debts) prior to voting
21 may be deemed a poll tax; and

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23 **WHEREAS** other people with debt are allowed to vote;

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25 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Legislature enact laws
26 restoring the voting rights of ex-offenders upon release from incarceration and
27 completion of parole; and

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29 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that Washington State Democratic Party
30 distribute copies of this resolution to Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire
31 and all members of the Democratic Caucuses in the Washington State Legislature.
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34 Submitted by the Grays Harbor County Democrats to the Democratic Central
35 Committee for consideration at its June 14 convention in Spokane. (Date Submitted
36 4/12/2008)

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38 The Resolutions Committee "AMENDED THIS RESOLUTION AND RECOMMENDED
39 A PASS" at its May 31, 2008 meeting in Ellensburg.

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41 The Washington State Democratic Convention "PASSED" this resolution at its June 14,
42 2008 meeting in Spokane.