

Resolution on High-Stakes Testing

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3 **WHEREAS** our nation's future well-being depends on a high-quality public education
4 system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning,
5 and strengthens the nation's social and economic well-being;
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7 **WHEREAS** our nation's school systems have been spending growing amounts of time,
8 money and energy on high-stakes standardized testing, in which student performance
9 on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students,
10 educators and schools;
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12 **WHEREAS** the overreliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal
13 accountability systems in undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public
14 schools by hampering educator's efforts to focus on the broad range of learning
15 experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration,
16 communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow
17 students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy;
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19 **WHEREAS** it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often
20 unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness;
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22 **WHEREAS** the over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable
23 collateral damage in too many school, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to
24 the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent
25 teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate;
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27 **WHEREAS** high-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all
28 backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners,
29 children of color, and those with disabilities; and
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31 **WHEREAS** the culture and structure of the systems in which students learn must
32 change in order to foster engaging school experiences that promote joy in learning,
33 depth of thought and breadth of knowledge for students;
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35 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Party calls on
36 the governor, state legislature and state education boards and administrators to
37 continually re-examine public school accountability systems in this state, and to
38 develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which does not require
39 extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student
40 learning, and is used to support students and improve schools; and
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43 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic
44 Party calls upon our state's congressional delegation to draft and sponsor legislation to
45 overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the "No
46 Child Left Behind Act"), to reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of
47 evidence of student learning and school quality in accountability, and not mandate any
48 fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators.
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51 Submitted by the Lincoln County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic
52 Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date Submitted
53 5/3/2012)

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55 Recommended 'PASS WITH AMENDMENTS' by the Subcommittee on the Corporate
56 Power, Education, Labor, and Media Reform at its May 12th meeting in Ellensburg.

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58 Recommended 'PASS' by the Platform Committee at its June 1st meeting in Seattle.

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60 'PASSED' by the Washington State Democratic Convention at its June 2nd meeting in
61 Seattle.