Resolution in Support of the Washington Voting Rights Act

WHEREAS local political office holders are chosen from electoral districts so as to adhere to the American ideal of representative democracy;

WHEREAS racial and ethnic minorities are under-represented in local elected office in some areas of the state where at-large voting systems are combined with racially polarized voting; for example, in the ten counties with the largest Latino population, Latinos are 33% of the population but only 4% of local elected officials; 99% of local elections in those counties are at-large and only 1% are single-district elections.

WHEREAS the Washington State Voting Rights Act, as proposed in HB 2612 and SB 6381, would provide protected classes of state voters with the ability to challenge an at-large voting system in Superior Court, where it can be determined whether that system is combined with racially-polarized voting so as to make it nearly impossible, statistically, for candidates of color to be elected to local office;

WHEREAS the Washington State Voting Rights Act provides for the creation of a district-based election system as the result of a successful challenge to an at-large voting system; and

WHEREAS the Washington State Voting Rights Act avoids recourse to the Federal courts, thereby providing local control and the opportunity to develop local remedies;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Washington State Democrats endorse the Washington Voting Rights Act and urge all members of our State Legislature to work for passage of the Washington Voting Rights Act.

Submitted by the Yakima County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date Submitted 4/30/2012)

Recommended 'PASS WITH AMENDMENTS' by the Subcommittee on Civil and Human Rights, Government and Political Reform, and Law and the Justice System at its May 12th meeting in Ellensburg.

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

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