

## **A Resolution on Lowering the Threshold to Approve a School Construction Bond**

**WHEREAS** Article VII, Section 2 of the Washington State Constitution allows taxing districts, including school districts, to levy property taxes exceeding an aggregate 1 percent limit on property value if three-fifths (60 percent) of voters approve such a proposition at a general election (and provided that at least 40 percent of the voters who voted at preceding general election participate in the election); and

**WHEREAS** Article VIII, Section 6 of the Washington State Constitution prohibits taxing districts, including school districts, from incurring debt exceeding 1.5 percent of the value of taxable property in the jurisdiction unless approved by 60 percent of voters in an election; and

**WHEREAS** Article VIII, Section 6 of the Washington State Constitution further prohibits total indebtedness exceeding 5 percent of the value of taxable property; and

**WHEREAS** this requirement for a supermajority of voters did not exist in the Washington State Constitution until the constitution was amended in 1943 following the Great Depression and during World War II; and

**WHEREAS** statewide voters approved a change to the state constitution in 2008 to allow a simple majority vote for school district operating levies; and

**WHEREAS** many states recognize that requiring an unreasonable supermajority of the voters to approve school construction bonds results in untenable and unsafe public school facilities. California, for example, previously required two-thirds of voters to approve school bond issues before passing Proposition 39 in 2000, which reduced the threshold to 55 percent voter approval; and

**WHEREAS** many school districts in Washington pass school construction bond measures with over 55 percent of voter approval only to fail to achieve the 60 percent voter approval required by the State Constitution; and

**WHEREAS** reducing the threshold required for approval of a school construction bond would not alter the allowable total indebtedness.

**THEREFORE BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Central Committee calls upon our State Legislative delegation to introduce a bill for a state constitutional amendment reducing the voter approval rate for school bonds to a simple majority of voters casting ballots.

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44 Submitted by the Mason County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic  
45 Central Committee for consideration at its September 21, 2013 meeting in Ocean Shores.  
46 (Date Submitted 9/13/2013)

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48 The WSDCC Resolutions Committee "AMENDED THIS RESOLUTION AND  
49 RECOMMENDED A PASS" at its September 21, 2013 meeting in Ocean Shores

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51 The WSDCC "PASSED" this resolution at its September 21, 2013 meeting in Ocean  
52 Shores.