

## Resolution to Restore Fairness to the GED

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3 **WHEREAS** more than 1,000,000 students attend public schools in Washington State,  
4 comprised of about 80,000 students at each grade level;

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6 **WHEREAS** only 60,000 students graduate from Washington high schools each year,  
7 leaving about 20,000 annually who have not received the help they need to graduate -  
8 in part because our state has consistently provided among the lowest levels of  
9 education funding as a percent of income and maintains the highest class sizes in the  
10 nation;

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12 **WHEREAS** this shortfall in funding for public education has repeatedly been ruled by  
13 our State Supreme Court to be a violation of our State Constitution, meaning that those  
14 struggling students have already been deprived of their Constitutional right to a quality  
15 education;

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17 **WHEREAS**, in the past, more than 11,000 of those annual “high school dropouts” (i.e.,  
18 more than half of the 20,000 students who did not graduate) eventually earned a High  
19 School Equivalency (HSE) certificate, more commonly called the General Education  
20 Development certificate or “GED certificate,” by taking and passing a specific test  
21 therefor;

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23 **WHEREAS** having a high school diploma or GED certificate is a requirement to attend  
24 college and often to get a good job;

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26 **WHEREAS** lack of a high school diploma or GED certificate is often associated with an  
27 increased risk of taking drugs, committing crimes, and ending up in prison - meaning  
28 that for many young adults, the GED test is not merely a second chance at a productive  
29 life, it is their last chance;

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31 **WHEREAS** in January 2014 a new and dramatically more difficult GED test was  
32 introduced, designed by Pearson Testing Service (a for-profit entity), resulting in the  
33 pass rate dropping from 50% to less than 10% between January and April of 2014;

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35 **WHEREAS** the Pearson GED test costs about twice as much as the previous version;

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37 **WHEREAS** a substantially better high school equivalency test called the “HiSET” is  
38 now available, at a significantly lower cost, from the (nonprofit) University of Iowa’s  
39 College of Education; and

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41 **WHEREAS** the HiSET has already been adopted as a high school equivalency option in  
42 eleven States;

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44 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we urge our Governor and State Legislature to  
45 restore fairness and hope for high school dropouts by allowing them the opportunity to  
46 take the non-profit Iowa HiSET High School Equivalency Test rather than the for-profit  
47 Pearson GED High School Equivalency Test.

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50 Submitted by the 31<sup>st</sup> LD Democrats to the WSDCC. (Date Submitted 9/2/2014)

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52 Submitted by the King County Democrats to the WSDCC. (Date Submitted 9/5/2014)

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54 Recommended Pass by the Resolutions Committee at their September 13, 2014 Meeting  
55 in Ferndale.

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57 Passed by the WSDCC at their September 13, 2014 Meeting in Ferndale.