

## Washington Promise

1  
2  
3 **WHEREAS** President Obama has proposed making the first two years of community  
4 college free;

5  
6 **WHEREAS** Tennessee and Oregon have already passed legislation creating “promise”  
7 programs offering free tuition and fees for their state’s high school graduates;

8  
9 **WHEREAS** the federal Pell Grant, when initially created in the early 1970s, fully  
10 covered the costs of attending community college and now covers just 60% of the total  
11 cost of attendance;

12  
13 **WHEREAS** costs for community college have increased by 28 percent since 2000;

14  
15 **WHEREAS** community colleges provide many important unfunded programs and  
16 services, such as veterans education and transition services;

17  
18 **WHEREAS** community colleges play an essential role in higher education, in no small  
19 part because they serve as a pathway to postsecondary education;

20  
21 **WHEREAS** close to half of all students who completed a degree at a four-year  
22 institution in 2013-14 had enrolled at a two-year institution at some point in the  
23 previous 10 years;

24  
25 **WHEREAS** community colleges are an especially important educational resource for  
26 students from low income families, as well as for adults returning to school to obtain  
27 additional training or credentials that promote workforce development;

28  
29 **WHEREAS** there is a gap in the supply of American workers prepared adequately for  
30 middle-skills jobs – those that require more education and training than a high school  
31 diploma but less than a four-year college degree – and this lack is hurting the U.S.  
32 middle class, as well as U.S. global competitiveness; and

33  
34 **WHEREAS** the Washington Promise Program, helps to make the first two years of  
35 college affordable and accessible to the state's citizens by offering a tuition waiver for  
36 eligible students enrolled in associate degree or certificate programs offered by the  
37 state's community and technical colleges;

38  
39 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Washington State Democrats, call upon  
40 Washington State House and Senate legislators to pass the legislation creating the  
41 Washington Promise Program; and  
42

43 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we, the Washington State Democrats,  
44 call upon Washington State legislators to ensure that appropriations are approved to  
45 fully fund the Washington Promise Program.  
46

---

47  
48 Submitted by the Benton County Convention.

49  
50 The Platform Committee recommended that this resolution be passed at their June 17,  
51 2016 meeting.

52  
53 The 2016 Washington State Democratic Convention passed this resolution on June 18,  
54 2016.  
55