

Resolution Supporting Passage of the Washington Voting Rights Act

Whereas all voters deserve the opportunity to be represented by candidates of their choice; and

Whereas many communities across the state of Washington have been unable to elect their preferred candidates due to being outnumbered in at-large voting systems; and

Whereas people of color have historically faced significant barriers to voting in the United States, and proactive steps continue to be necessary to address their underrepresentation in elected bodies at all levels; and

Whereas nearly all local elections in Washington use at-large voting systems and, where polarized voting as defined in the Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA) exists, an at-large system may prevent significant numbers of voters from having a meaningful voice in local elections; and

Whereas lawsuits addressing polarized voting have been successful in challenging exclusionary practices, but are expensive and time-consuming; and

Whereas some local governments have failed their responsibility to remedy the problem of voter disempowerment in local elections; and

Whereas the WVRA is modeled after the California Voting Rights Act, which has been successful in improving fairness in local elections throughout that state; and

Whereas the WVRA provides an opportunity to remedy the problem of polarized voting in a way that avoids the need for lawsuits, and establishes a uniform standard across the state while still according localities the flexibility to find a solution that fits their specific needs;

Therefore, be it resolved that we call upon the State Legislature to address the problem of polarized voting by passing the Washington Voting Rights Act; and

Be it further resolved that we call upon our legislators to wholeheartedly support the WVRA in the next legislative session, to make it a priority, and to work actively to ensure its passage; and

Be it finally resolved that a copy of this Resolution be sent to each member of the Democratic delegation in Olympia, to all King County Legislative District Organizations for consideration by their membership, and to the Washington State Democratic Central Committee for passage of this or a similar resolution.

Adopted September 22, 2015 by the King County Democratic Central Committee

*Originated by Alec Stephens,
LD37 State Committeeman*