Resolution in support of public financing of campaigns for the
Washington State Supreme Court

WHEREAS, our judicial system is an essential branch of government, and is the one branch of
government that must be uniquely impartial, independent and unbiased in order to best serve the
residents of Washington; and

WHEREAS, the improper appearance created by money in judicial elections is one of the most
important issues facing our judicial system today, and to maintain public confidence in the judiciary,
we must prevent not only corruption, but also the appearance of corruption; and

WHEREAS, it is also important to protect the fairness of elections for the highest court in
Washington state - the supreme court, and thereby to foster the public's trust in the integrity and
independence of the court in the face of increasingly large sums of money raised and spent by special
interest groups seeking to elect candidates to seats on the supreme court; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, over $4 million was raised and spent, largely by special interest groups and
donors, seeking election of favored candidates to the supreme court in Washington; and

WHEREAS, political campaigns are increasingly expensive and candidates for office, lacking an
alternative, must take substantial private contributions from a select community of interests and
individuals to keep up with the staggering costs required to compete in an election; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has had a successful and popular program of public financing for
judicial campaigns, since 2002, demonstrating that such a program can work. Most candidates use
the program, and they win. The result is: restored public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary,
more women and diversity on the court, reflecting the population. Judges who can focus on the law,
rather than needing to romance campaign financiers an Arizona study shows that clean elections
greatly expanded the universe of contributors by increasing the number of contributors as well as their
geographic, economic and ethnic diversity; and

WHEREAS, the state legislature is considering proposals, including HB 1738 filed by Rep. Marko
Liias and 31 other House co-sponsors, to adopt a program of public financing of campaigns for seats
on the Washington State Supreme Court, optional for candidates, and which would provide adequate
sums, including "fair fight" funds, to candidates who qualify for public financing support by
demonstrating reasonable voter support in a manner prescribed in the proposed bills;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the King County Democrats urges its legislators and the
Governor to support a program of public financing for campaigns for the Washington State Supreme
Court,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor, to
Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown and House Speaker Frank Chopp, and to all legislators from
districts wholly or partially in King County.

Passed unanimously by the King County Democratic Central Committee, January 27, 2009 at their
regularly scheduled monthly meeting.
Susan C. Sheary, Chair