

RESPECTING FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY OF RELIGION

WHEREAS the very first amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America enshrines Americans' religious freedom, including the right to practice any religion or none at all; and

WHEREAS President Barack Obama in his first inaugural address proclaimed “We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this earth; and

WHEREAS Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's opinion in *Lynch v. Donnelly* observed that state endorsement of religion “sends a message to non-adherents that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community; and

WHEREAS Democrats stand for an open and respectful dialogue about faith in society, embracing people of all faiths or none at all; and

WHEREAS the Democratic Party brings together people of many different faiths, united by shared values and a deep-seated commitment to tolerance, compassion, charity, and the well-being of others; and

WHEREAS the Washington State Democratic Party states on its web site: “we believe in the values of community, empathy, equality, tolerance, opportunity, and the common good of the interdependent world we share. These values provide the basis for our ideals and are supported by our state and federal Constitutions”; and

WHEREAS recent studies by the Pew Research show that almost 20 percent of Americans and 24 percent of Democratic-leaning registered voters report that they are unaffiliated with any religion; and

WHEREAS any gatherings (meeting, conventions, etc.) undertaken by the Washington state Democratic Party at any level (precinct, legislative district, county, congressional district, Washington State Democratic Central Committee or state) that intentionally or unintentionally excludes any group of Americans based on religious faith is inconsistent with the Party's values and beliefs; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Party and its affiliates will not support actions, proclamations or policies at Party events that would have the effect of excluding, intimidating or otherwise alienating any group including nonbelievers and the religiously unaffiliated, just as the Party does not support action that excludes any group by characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that neither the Washington State Democratic Party nor any of its affiliates (with the exception of special-interest caucuses) will undertake any sort of prayer, faith-based invocation, or religious activity of any kind at any Democratic Party event.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution preserves 1. The right to organize a caucus or special-interest group within the Washington State Democratic Party around religion to advance their specific political concerns 2. Social activities of the Washington State Democratic Party such as holiday parties 3. The ability to conduct meetings or any other Party business at any location such as a church.