

RESOLUTION 16 -12

Resolution Supporting a Simple Majority to Pass School Bonds

WHEREAS, the Port Angeles School District's February 10, 2015 bond measure to replace Port Angeles High School failed to reach the 60 percent supermajority required by the Washington State Constitution, receiving 48.9 percent of the vote in spite of a vigorous campaign against the bond by an anti-tax group;

WHEREAS, a survey commissioned by the Port Angeles Citizens for Education conducted in April 2015 found that 67% of the Port Angeles respondents gave the physical condition of the high school a negative rating (six of the ten buildings were built in 1953, two in 1958 and two in 1978);

WHEREAS, Sequim School District bond proposals have been defeated four times in two years, receiving a simple majority three of the four times and failing to reach a supermajority by less than one half of one percent in November 2015;

WHEREAS, inadequate school facilities are an education, health and safety issue;

WHEREAS, most Washington school districts do not have sufficient building capacity to meet the needs of state-mandated reduced class size required under Initiative 1351 which voters approved in fall of 2014;

WHEREAS, most states have simple-majority rules for passing school levy and bond measures;

WHEREAS, a simple majority for school bonds would give bonds a fighting chance to pass and return control of our children's future to the majority of voters, not the minority;

WHEREAS, school maintenance and operations levies have been exempted from the supermajority requirement since 2008 by the passage of a legislative initiative to amend the Washington State Constitution;

WHEREAS, making a simple majority the passing standard for school bonds will require passage of a legislative initiative to amend the Washington State Constitution and two thirds of both houses must approve the amendment to the Constitution before it is submitted to voters as an initiative;

WHEREAS, bills sponsored by 44 Democrats and 1 Republican, including Steve Tharinger and Kevin Van De Wege, propose amending the Constitution to change the voter approval requirement and provide for a simple majority of voters to authorize school district bonds (HRJ 4210 and HB 1941);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Clallam County Democrats urge the Washington State Legislature to pass these bills and place the amendment on the first available general election ballot for approval by the people.

Passed at the General Membership Meeting on 5/28/2016