

North Sound DSA Resolution, Expressing Support For “Ranked-Choice Voting”

WHEREAS, it is argued that voter turnout in a “top two” primary election system is significantly lower than the general election system and is not reflective of the general electorate; and

WHEREAS, under the “top two” primary system, voters may be motivated to engage in “strategic voting” whereby they vote to prevent a disfavored candidate from winning instead of casting a vote for their preferred candidates; and

WHEREAS, an alternative to the “top two” primary system is “ranked-choice voting,” whereby instead of choosing just one candidate to support in a given race, a voter ranks the candidates running in the order of that voter’s preference (e.g., 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice); and

WHEREAS, more than twenty jurisdictions in the united states have adopted some version of “ranked-choice voting,” including New York City, New York; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Memphis, Tennessee; Oakland, California; Payson, Utah; Takoma Park, Maryland; Benton County, Oregon; and the state of Maine; and

WHEREAS, it is argued that potential benefits of “ranked-choice voting” include lowered costs, increased voter turnout, improved civility in and decreased costs of political campaigns, and elected bodies that are more reflective of the electorate by measures of race, class, gender, and political beliefs; and

WHEREAS, local Washington jurisdictions are effectively prohibited from adopting “ranked-choice voting” by state law, which mandates a “top two” primary system and the use of numbered positions when multiple elected officials represent the same geography; and

WHEREAS, a bill currently before the Washington state legislature, HB 1156, as they are presently drafted, would amend state law to allow local jurisdictions the ability to adopt “ranked-choice voting”; and

WHEREAS, HB 1156 is a permissive bill, which do not dictate or impose any policies upon any jurisdiction, but rather, provide jurisdictions with the ability, should they choose, to adopt “ranked-choice voting”;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the North Sound DSA endorse the HB 1156; and

THEREFORE, BE FINALLY IT RESOLVED THAT that the North Sound DSA supports efforts to provide cities and other local governmental entities the option to implement “ranked-choice voting” for local elections.