

STOP VOTER SUPPRESSION BY SUPPORTING MANDATORY VOTING

WHEREAS, autocrats, nefarious foreign powers and anti-democracy operatives, who have infiltrated and taken control of the GOP, have routinely interfered with, limited and blocked voting across this country to deny the vote to the general population, in an effort to maintain their own power and personal profit; and

WHEREAS, high voter turnout has historically voted these autocrats out of office and prevented them from usurping power; and

WHEREAS, it has been shown that high levels of voter participation decreases the risk of political instability created by crises or charismatic, but sectionally focused, demagogues¹; and

WHEREAS, the degradation of our democracy by those who currently hold power in our capitol has been enabled by low voter turnout; and

WHEREAS, Democratic voters, people of color, the poor and disenfranchised are those targeted by efforts to prevent the populace from exercising their voting rights; and

WHEREAS, preventing the vote of disenfranchised people exacerbates their disenfranchisement and prevents their election to public office; and

WHEREAS, although disillusionment, distrust, alienation, exhaustion, fear and apathy, among other things, have dissuaded American citizens from exercising their voting rights, leading to low voter turnout among the very people who suffer most from the results of low voter turnout, patriotic citizens across our country are calling for justice and reform that can only be accomplished by ensuring that all our citizens vote and allowing the true voice of the people to hold sway; and

WHEREAS, voting in a democracy, in the United States of America, is not just a right and privilege, but a critical responsibility of every citizen (a far greater 'duty to our community' than other civil responsibilities, such as taxation, jury duty and compulsory education²) that, for the good of us all, should not be left to choice or made vulnerable to those enemies of freedom who would deny that right to others; and

WHEREAS, although there is a proposed amendment to the US Constitution that would guarantee all Americans the right to vote³, the Constitution does not currently guarantee that right for anyone, but merely forbids abridging that right based on specific, narrowly defined criteria; and

WHEREAS, many countries have effectively and seamlessly implemented a mandatory voting requirement that calls for submission of a valid ballot by all registered voters in every election, without mandating a vote for any position; and

WHEREAS, compelling citizens to vote helps to remove barriers to access, reducing the impact that external factors, such as the weather, transport, or restrictive employers, might have—if everyone must vote, identification and removal of restrictions on voting would be required⁴; and

WHEREAS, once barriers to voting have been removed, enforcement of voting requirements via, e.g., establishment of a compliance incentive and penalties for those who interfere with voting rights, would ensure true representation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington First Legislative District Democrats (FDD) fully supports implementation of mandatory voting that requires submission of a valid ballot by all registered voters in every election; and

¹ Compulsory voting in Australia". *Australian Electoral Commission*. Archived from the original on February 17, 2011

² Lijphart, Arend (1997) "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma", *The American Political Science Review* 91(1): 8–11, (Subscription required for full access.)

³ <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/28/the-missing-right-a-constitutional-right-to-vote/>

⁴ Hill, L 2002 'On the reasonableness of compelling citizens to 'vote': The Australian case', *Political Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp.88-89

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the FDD call upon our state and federal legislators to enact laws to implement mandatory voting policies, to remove barriers to voting access (such as implementing mail-in ballots and automatic voter registration) for all citizens and to enact penalties for those who raise barriers to voting; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be forwarded to the Snohomish County Democrats, King County Democrats, and WA State Democrats Central Committee for consideration at their next meeting; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution will be sent to the FDD local, state and federal Legislators, the Governor, and King and Snohomish County Councils.

Proposed by Jackie McGourty, July 02, 2020.

Recommended DO PASS by the First District Democrats Issues Committee, July 2, 2020

Referred back to Issues Committee for revision by the body, July 20, 2020

RECOMMENDED DO PASS WITH REVISIONS BY THE FIRST DISTRICT DEMOCRATS ISSUES COMMITTEE,
August 6, 2020