

Resolution Supporting Equity Within Washington's Public Employment, Education, and Contracting Systems

(adopted Aug. 8, 2026)

WHEREAS, Initiative 200, passed in 1998 and codified in Washington law, restricts the use of race, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin in public employment, public education, and public contracting; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of Initiative 200 has contributed to barriers in opportunity, representation, hiring, advancement, education access, and public contracting for historically excluded communities, particularly Black Washingtonians who continue to face disproportionate economic and workforce disparities; and

WHEREAS, Washington State legal guidance has clarified that Initiative 200 does not prohibit all race-conscious or sex-conscious measures, including outreach, recruitment, training, aspirational goals, disparity studies, barrier removal, and other lawful equity strategies that do not constitute prohibited preferential treatment; and

WHEREAS, historically marginalized communities across Washington State continue to face the lasting impacts of systemic racism, economic exclusion, underrepresentation, and unequal access to public resources and opportunities, with Black workers, Black-owned businesses, and Black communities often experiencing some of the most persistent disparities; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has a responsibility to fully utilize every lawful tool available to expand equitable access, remove structural barriers, and address the persistent disparities that continue despite existing equity guidance and initiatives; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the 42nd LD Democrats supports the full use of lawful equity measures under current Washington law, including targeted outreach, inclusive recruitment, workforce development, supplier diversity, disparity studies, data transparency, mentorship, technical assistance, and accountability measures in public employment, public education, and public contracting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 42nd LD Democrats supports increased investment in historically marginalized communities through programs that expand access to public contracting, apprenticeships, state employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, and leadership opportunities, particularly for communities disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and economic exclusion; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the 42nd LD Democrats calls upon Washington State elected officials, agencies, institutions of higher education, local governments, and public contracting authorities to fully utilize lawful, measurable, community-informed equity strategies available under current Washington law to address documented disparities impacting historically excluded communities throughout Washington State.