

Resolution Advising Rejection of Port Angeles School District's Proposed Capital Levy

The Port Angeles School Board (PASD) seeks approval of a six-year, \$46.7 million capital levy (\$2.47 per thousand of assessed valuation, added to the current \$3.20 levy rate, increasing district revenue from property taxes by 75%).

Whereas the PASD board chose to propose a capital levy requiring only a simple majority vote to approve, rather than a bond requiring a 60% supermajority, disregarding the will of Washington state voters who five times passed initiatives requiring a two-thirds vote for the state legislature to raise taxes; and further chose to call a special February election at a \$70,000 cost to taxpayers, rather than placing the levy measure on last November's general election ballot at a cost of approximately \$20,000; and

Whereas alternatives such as modular construction to provide a few classrooms where needed, and renovation of vacant Fairview Elementary to provide another safe, comfortable, contemporary school for elementary or sixth-grade students, saving millions of taxpayer dollars, were excluded from consideration by the PASD Board in favor of highest-cost construction options, although modular construction meets or exceeds all building codes and ***reduces cost by 35% or more***; and Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Facilities Administrator Tom Carver advises, "*remodeling always costs less than new construction*;" and

Whereas the PASD board does not consistently identify or adhere to the purpose of the levy. **Goal 1** of the PASD Hazard Mitigation Plan states: "*Reducing threats to life safety is the highest priority*" ... "*All facilities are at a very high risk [of seismic failure.]*" (italics added), yet the PASD Board instead asks for \$46.7 million to either fulfill "new state mandates... calling for lowering class sizes," or "relieve over-crowding." However:

- a) Washington State's Attorney General advised: "[I-1351] would direct the *legislature to allocate funds to reduce class sizes* and increase staffing support for students in all K-12 grades. The measure *would leave intact* the statement in *the school funding law that nothing in that law requires school districts to maintain a particular classroom-teacher-to-student ratio . . .*" (Italics added)
- b) Center for American Progress, the Brookings Institute and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University research *found no improvement in student learning from class-size reductions*. (Washington Policy Center report. Italics added)
- c) Current PASD total enrollment of 1,254, is less than peak 1990, and yearly enrollment has varied little in recent years, after losing about 20% of its students between 1997-2007.
- d) "Life safety" of students and employees could be vastly improved at PASD's eight school locations and several main district buildings, for a comparable or lesser amount (\$15 million for seismic upgrades, including approximately \$1.3 million for Hamilton Elementary, leaving \$31 million for heating, window, and other efficiency improvements for all schools.)

Therefore, the Clallam County Republican Party Central Committee recommends that voters reject the PASD capital levy on the February special ballot.