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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8004

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State of Washington                      63rd Legislature                      2013 Regular Session

By Senators Roach, Hasegawa, and Conway

Read first time 01/31/13. Referred to Committee on Governmental Operations.

1            TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO PATRICK R. DONAHOE,  
5 POSTMASTER GENERAL, UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE:

6            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
7 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
8 represent and petition as follows:

9            WHEREAS, Washington State has established an exclusively mail-in  
10 voting system, a system which has proved an effective and popular form  
11 of voting but which requires citizens to pay for that right by way of  
12 postage; and

13           WHEREAS, Washington State has many rural communities, some of which  
14 can only be reached by water or air. It is therefore impractical to  
15 expect citizens in these communities to take a ballot to a drop box;  
16 and

17           WHEREAS, Expending monetary resources in order to participate in  
18 the electoral process clearly calls into question the prohibition of  
19 excising a poll tax, as stated by the 24th Amendment to the  
20 Constitution of the United States, and as noted by the U.S. Supreme

1 Court, which stated in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, 383 U.S.  
2 663 (1966), that "wealth, like race, creed, or color, is not germane to  
3 one's ability to participate intelligently in the electoral process";  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States ensures that the  
6 right of citizens to vote shall not be "denied or abridged"; and

7 WHEREAS, Voting is a foundational right of a free and democratic  
8 people, and fair and free elections are at the heart of our democracy;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress  
10 and the Postmaster General of the United States Postal Service, in  
11 goodwill and the best interest of the citizens of the United States,  
12 establish a special accommodation for official election mail, including  
13 but not limited to ballots for primary and general elections, stating  
14 the concession of prepaid postage for Members of the Voting Electorate,  
15 similar to the "franking privilege," which has provided free postage to  
16 Members of Congress since our country's inception.

17 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
18 transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United  
19 States, Patrick R. Donahoe, Postmaster General of the United States  
20 Postal Service, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker  
21 of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the  
22 State of Washington.

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