
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8004

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators Roach and Hasegawa

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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