



Legislation Text

File #: 2012-0069, **Version:** 2

A MOTION supporting the creation and adoption of a Washington Voting Rights Act by the Washington state Legislature.

WHEREAS, to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibits states from denying citizens the right to vote based on race or color, Congress passed the federal Voting Rights Act in 1965, and

WHEREAS, the federal Voting Rights Act was extended in 1970, 1975, 1982 and 2006, affirming the need for protections and the importance of combating persistent discrimination in voting and elections, and

WHEREAS, the federal Voting Rights Act outlaws discriminatory voting practices, including electoral structural changes that systematically dilute the voting strength of minority citizens, and

WHEREAS, high costs and long waits associated with legal action in federal court may discourage and hinder the ability of parties to bring suits to enforce their rights under the federal Voting Rights Act, and

WHEREAS, building upon the protections provided by the federal Voting Rights Act and to provide for a more accessible and local means of protecting voting rights, the state of California enacted the California Voting Rights Act in 2002 and has since seen an marked increase of minorities in local elected office and civic engagement among minority communities, and

WHEREAS, the Washington Voting Rights Act, Senate Bill 6381 and House Bill 2612, modeled after the law in California, has been introduced and is currently under consideration by the Washington state Legislature, and

WHEREAS, if enacted, the Washington Voting Rights Act would promote equal representation by helping ensure at-large elections and district-based elections could not be drawn or maintained in a manner that

dilutes the votes of a protected class or denies a protected class an equal opportunity to elect candidates of its choice or an equal opportunity to influence the outcome of an election, and

WHEREAS, King County has responsibility for administering elections and is committed to an integrated effort to apply the countywide strategic plan's principle of "fair and just" in all the county does, and

WHEREAS, ensuring a fair and just electoral process for members of a protected class and equal opportunity to influence electoral outcomes are essential to our system of representative democracy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The metropolitan King County council supports the creation of a Washington Voting Rights Act that promotes equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in our political process for members of any protected class, as defined in the federal Voting Rights Act.