

Vashon Progressive Alliance Endorsement of Initiative 1000

Approved November 20, 2018

I-1000 is a statewide initiative to the Washington Legislature promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion for women, minorities, people with disabilities, and honorably discharged veterans in public employment, education, and contracting, by reinstating Affirmative Action for government entities.

Diversity is America's greatest asset, yet, since the passage of I-200 in 1998, Washington State has been prohibited from using Affirmative Action to address inequities arising from systemic racism, sexism, and other biases and is only one of 8 states in the country that bans Affirmative Action. I-200, sponsored by Tim Eyman, John Carlson, and anti-Affirmative Action activist Wade Connerly of California, has proven to be discriminatory in its effect.

Washington's Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises (OMWBE), states that over the past 20 years, state spending with woman-owned and minority-owned small businesses has decreased from 10% prior to I-200, to a current 3%, costing these businesses an estimated \$3.5 billion - \$3.8 billion. This devastating cost negatively impacts individuals and communities across our state and exacerbates income inequalities through loss of jobs and small businesses.

Prior to I-200, 50% of Native American High School students were on track to enter college; after I-200, that figure has dropped to 38%. Before 1998, over 70% of qualified African American freshman who had applied to the University of Washington were admitted; in 2017, nearly 70% of qualified African Americans applying were denied. University of Washington and Washington State University presidents have both testified to the State Senate that I-200 leaves our institutions of higher learning at a "competitive disadvantage" when attempting to attract highly qualified students and staff.

I-1000 would repeal I-200, seeking to mitigate racial, gender, and other imbalances by bringing equity, justice, and fairness back into public policy through Affirmative Action without the use of quotas or preferential treatment.

I-1000 would expand state Affirmative Action laws to include all honorably discharged veterans, not just those from the Vietnam era or disabled veterans as was previously the case.

I-1000 would expand the definition of anti-discrimination laws to include sexual orientation.

I-1000 would establish a Governor's Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, tasked with oversight of implementation and enforcement of Affirmative Action in at least 25 State agencies.

Vashon Progressive Alliance values and welcomes diversity and joins multiple community groups, the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), The Washington State Democrats, the 34th District Democrats, and former Governors Christine Gregoire, Gary Locke, and Dan Evans in endorsing I-1000.