Proposed by Kathleen Smith, PCO 2172

WHEREAS Washington State Representative Eric Pettigrew (D) proposed House Bill 1497 which would allow some Public School Board members to be appointed by the mayor; and

WHEREAS a citizen’s right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and should not be dismantled or diminished at federal, state or local levels; and

WHEREAS if mayors were to appoint some Public School Board members there is no guarantee that such a political appointment would be based on an expertise in education or commitment to public education; and

WHEREAS appointed Public School Board members are not accountable to the voting public and are under no obligation to respond to parent concerns, policies and practices; and

WHEREAS "Most researchers agree on one negative consequence — when mayors take charge of public schools, the role of parents and the community, especially among minority groups, can be marginalized and can further compromise democratic control of schools" (Harvard, 2006; Moscovitch et al., 2010; Hess, 2003, 2011);[[1]](#footnote-1) and

WHEREAS  the City of Seattle does not have the capacity, jurisdiction or expertise to manage public education. The city is grappling with unresolved challenges of police reform, recrudescence of crime and gun violence, transportation - including the escalating costs and uncertain future of the Deep Bore Tunnel (BERTHA), homelessness, unaffordable housing and infrastructure to meet the needs of a rapidly growing city. The city has unresolved issues and should not take on education; and

WHEREAS research indicates that partnerships between cities and school districts work better than mayoral appointments to the board (Research from Professor Tom Alsbury, Seattle Pacific University); and

WHEREAS  mayoral control of public education  in other cities in the nation have resulted in proliferation of charter schools and other highly controversial initiatives.  Seattle voters did not approve charter schools; and

WHEREAS mayoral control of education in other cities has become highly controversial. In Chicago, hundreds of citizens have rallied to demand restoration of elected school boards. In Chicago, the opportunity gap has expanded since the school board was appointed. The number of appointed and mayoral controlled boards in urban cities have been in decline because they have not served citizens; and

WHEREAS House Bill 1497 does not provide a mechanism to recall appointed Public School Board members or provide any other measure of accountability to the public;  and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 36th Legislative Democratic District Organization of Washington State oppose HB 1497, proposed by Representative Eric Pettigrew (D), and any other legislation that would allow mayors to appoint some Public School Board members; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge all Washington State legislators to reject HB 1497 and any other proposition to support appointed school board positions; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the 36th LDDO send this resolution, upon its adoption, to all Washington State legislators and Seattle Mayor Ed Murray.

1. See more at: <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Policies/Mayoral-involvement-in-urban-schools-At-a-glance#sthash.IYVRT0X3.ATrXAIvd.dpuf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)