

SOB 2011-03

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CREATION OF POLITICAL DISTRICTS IN WHICH PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE IN THE MAJORITY

WHEREAS: the U.S. Constitution requires that all states evaluate electoral district boundaries every ten years following the U.S. Census, and, since 1983, in Washington state, the body that makes these decisions is the Washington State Redistricting Commission, and

WHEREAS: the 2010 Census shows that Washington State's population has grown to over 6.7 million people, meaning that our state will now receive a new, 10th congressional district, to go alongside with our state's 49 legislative districts, and

WHEREAS: the law requires that our state's population be "apportioned" into our 10 congressional districts and 49 legislative districts such that each district has a population that is "as nearly equal as is practicable," entailing that each congressional district should have 672,454 people, and that each legislative district should have 137,235 people, and

WHEREAS: the pertinent laws on the matter also stipulate that voting district boundaries must be drawn to:

- Comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure that all racial and ethnic populations have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.
- Ensure that each district is contiguous, compact, and convenient to the extent reasonable.
- Respect boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities that have common interests and minimize their division.
- Establish boundaries that do not favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate, or political party, and

WHEREAS: in the Puget Sound region, the number of people of color grew by 50% over the past decade, such that King County's population of people of color is now 35%, and four cities in south King County now have populations in which people of color are in the majority (i.e., Tukwila – 62.4%, SeaTac – 60.5%, Renton – 50.6%, Kent – 50.3%), and

WHEREAS: the growth in the population of people of color (over 542,000) accounts for over 65% of the state's overall population growth (830,419), i.e., the growth of the population of people of color in Washington is the major reason our state is getting a new congressional district, and

WHEREAS: a new Congressional district and three legislative districts in King County that comprise a majority of people of color will encourage elected representatives to be genuinely accountable to the needs and issues of those diverse populations, and

WHEREAS: AFT Washington is a labor union that stands for a system of political representation embodying equality, justice and genuine accountability, and

RESOLVED: that AFT Washington supports the creation of a new 10th Congressional district and three legislative districts with a majority of people of color in King County, and be it

RESOLVED: that AFT Washington shall communicate our support for this redistricting plan to other labor affiliates and community groups, elected officials, and the Washington State Redistricting Commission, and be it further

RESOLVED: that AFT Washington will ask its locals to encourage members to come involved in the redistricting process and communicate this position to promote social justice.

Originally submitted by the Human Rights Committee and passed at the AFT Washington Executive Board meeting on July 29, 2011.