

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, EXPRESSING COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR "RANKED-CHOICE VOTING"**

**WHEREAS**, it is argued that voter turnout in a "top two" primary election system is significantly lower than the general election system and is not reflective of the general electorate; and

**WHEREAS**, under the "top two" primary system, voters may be motivated to engage in "strategic voting" whereby they vote to prevent a disfavored candidate from winning instead of casting a vote for their preferred candidates; and

**WHEREAS**, an alternative to the "top two" primary system is "ranked-choice voting," whereby instead of choosing just one candidate to support in a given race, a voter ranks the candidates running in the order of that voter's preference (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> choice, 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, 3<sup>rd</sup> choice); and

**WHEREAS**, more than twenty jurisdictions in the United States have adopted some version of "ranked-choice voting," including New York City, New York; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Memphis, Tennessee; Oakland, California; Payson, Utah; Takoma Park, Maryland; Benton County, Oregon; and the State of Maine; and

**WHEREAS**, it is argued that potential benefits of "ranked-choice voting" include lowered costs, increased voter turnout, improved civility in and decreased costs of political campaigns, and elected bodies that are more reflective of the electorate by measures of race, class, gender, and political beliefs; and

**WHEREAS**, local Washington jurisdictions are effectively prohibited from adopting "ranked-choice voting" by state law, which mandates a "top two" primary system and the use of numbered positions when multiple elected officials represent the same geography; and

**WHEREAS**, two bills currently before the Washington State Legislature, HB 1722 and SB 5708, as they are presently drafted, would amend state law to allow local jurisdictions the ability to adopt "ranked-choice voting"; and

**WHEREAS**, HB 1722 and SB 5708 are permissive bills, which do not dictate or impose any policies upon any jurisdiction, but rather, provide jurisdictions with the ability, should they choose, to adopt "ranked-choice voting";

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE** that the City of Olympia supports efforts to provide cities and other local governmental entities the option to implement "ranked-choice voting" for local elections.

**PASSED BY THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

**Mark Barber**

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CITY ATTORNEY