

18.47 Promoting Civics Education, Voter Registration, and Voting

Resolution passed 2024

Whereas, the United States is founded upon the principle of a participatory democracy where the people work together in a civil manner to choose their form of government, its laws and the leaders who implement and enforce those laws; and

Whereas, the United States Constitution enables residents to participate in government and social discourse through the protection of individual freedoms, including freedom of speech, peaceable assembly and petitioning of the Government, which are articulated in the First Amendment; and

Whereas, learning to discern the difference between misinformation, disinformation, and unbiased and verified information is necessary to critically process the world of digital media and be active, informed participants in a constitutional democracy; and

Whereas, the 2016 OSPI Digital Citizenship Recommendations report concludes that “media literacy empowers individuals to participate as informed and active citizens in a democracy” and that “helping our students navigate the deep waters of technology and become responsible, ethical digital citizens is crucial to their development and to our future”; and

Whereas, the United States Constitution enables citizens to participate in democracy by voting in elections for offices in all levels of government, including school boards and state and national offices, and voting on ballot measures that address tax structures and funding mechanisms for state and local government entities, including school districts; and

Whereas, Washington State PTA is an organization that follows the democratic principles of participatory and representative democracy by voting for its leaders and debating and voting for bylaws and advocacy platform components; and

Whereas Washington State PTA is an advocacy organization that promotes a well-rounded education for every child and youth, and a component of public education includes studying history and government; and

Whereas, the State of Washington has resources and programs to support voter registration, voter participation, and early registration of youth who are 16- and 17-years old known as the Future Voter program; has curriculum resources to meet the state requirement for teaching civics at every level of the public school system; and celebrates Temperance and Good Citizenship Day on January 16, using that day to promote voter registration of youth in high schools; and

Whereas, the United States requires schools that receive federal funding to educate its students on the U.S. Constitution, known as Constitution Day and Citizenship Day; and

Whereas, National PTA has information about voter registration and getting out the vote on its website and hosts an annual lobby day with elected U.S. Senators and Representatives known as Legislative Conference Hill Day.

Therefore be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils promote the teaching of civics as defined in RCW 28A.230.094, promote the teaching of media literacy and digital citizenship as defined in RCW 28A.650.010, support the incorporation of the state’s adopted civics standards into classroom curricula, and encourage school districts and OSPI to reimagine the civics curricula to be interactive and reach all students and families; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils annually promote the active participation of schools and families in the Washington State Future Voter program, Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, and Constitution Day and Citizenship Day; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils educate members on an on-going basis about voter registration and voter participation, election dates, hosting candidate forums, participating in town halls with elected officials, meeting with elected officials, testifying before legislative and decision-making bodies, the definition of a citizen and how citizens and non-citizens can participate in the governing process of American civil society; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils encourage National PTA to regularly and actively educate its membership about Constitution Day and Citizenship Day; and promote resources and methods to engage voters, including voter registration and voting, participating in town halls, hosting candidate forums, and meeting with public officials.