



Washington State Senate

Senator Sharon Nelson

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Senator Schoesler:

Following the Senate Rules meeting on Wednesday, and with the end of session rapidly approaching, we feel it is necessary to establish what needs to be done in the eyes of your caucus to pass HB 1745, known as the Washington Voting Rights Act.

Senator Hasegawa has tried this session to pull both the Senate and House versions of the bill to the floor from Rules, and both times you have said the bill is “not ready” and it has failed on a party line vote. While we recognize that Senator Fain, and other members of the Republican caucus, have been working on amendments – time is growing short if the bill is to be moved to the floor.

As you know, access to voting is what makes a democracy. If citizens are denied the ability to self-govern, we cease to be a free society. We therefore ask that you offer a show of good faith that it may be successfully pulled at the next Rules meeting.

Several of your members of course support the bill, and it has been thoroughly worked over in the years this legislation has been before this body. Amendments were suggested this session so that loose-end concerns of the Cities and others may be addressed, and we expect that those are close to resolution.

As you are probably aware, the City of Yakima spent roughly \$1 million on the lawsuit filed against them, where in a community that is 40 percent Latino, not a single elected council member in Yakima is of Latino descent. It is clear our state pays a great fiscal and moral price by maintaining the status quo with regards to this issue.

As former President Ronald Reagan said, “There are no easy answers, but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right.” With a bill that has been thoroughly vetted, there must be some simple answers to ensure we do what is right for all Washingtonians, and allow this legislation to receive a vote on the Senate floor.

We therefore respectfully request that you respond so we have certainty as to whether HB 1745 will be moved from Rules and passed by April 26th, by this coming Monday, April 13th.

Regards,
Senator Sharon K. Nelson

Senator Karen Fraser
