



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2019-0144, **Version:** 2

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A MOTION calling on the Washington State Legislature to adopt the Washington State Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Act (Initiative-1000) to ensure every resident of Washington state has equal opportunity and access to public education, public employment and public contracting.

WHEREAS, Motion 15281 established King County's State Legislative Agenda, including a focus on ensuring the fair treatment of underserved groups in public employment, education and contracting, and

WHEREAS, the first national reference to affirmative action was made by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 in an executive order directing government contractors to take "affirmative action to ensure applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin," and

WHEREAS, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and issued an executive order that created the means to enforce affirmative action policies for the first time, and

WHEREAS affirmative action admissions programs were taken up by public and private universities in the late 1960s and 1970s, and

WHEREAS, in November 1998, Washington state voters passed Initiative 200, which prohibited preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public contracting, public hiring and public education, and

WHEREAS, in December 1998, Governor Locke issued Directive No. 98-01 to guide state agencies in implementing this Initiative and it stated that "Race, sex, color, ethnicity and national origin may not be used in final selection of an applicant for public employment, unless allowed under section 4 of I-200," and

WHEREAS, "affirmative action" is generally defined as an active effort to improve the employment of educational opportunities of people of color and women, and

WHEREAS, 395,000 signatures were gathered in support of Initiative 1000 ("I-1000"), the largest total of signatures ever gathered in support of a Washington State Initiative to the Legislature, and

WHEREAS, I-1000 amends the language prohibiting preferential treatment to include "age, sexual orientation, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or honorably discharged veteran or military status," and

WHEREAS, I-1000 also states that the state may implement affirmative action laws, regulations, policies or procedures so long as the participation goals or outreach efforts do not utilize quotas and do not constitute preferential treatment, and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court affirmed that "student body precedent is a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race in university admissions," and highlighted that numerous expert studies and reports show that a diverse student body promotes learning outcomes and better prepares a student for societal prosperity, and

WHEREAS, affirmative action policies support historically underserved communities in overcoming historic racial discrimination and racial segregation and are designed to improve the lives of all Americans, regardless of race, by increasing the integration of race, socioeconomic status and gender in professional institutions and the work place, and

WHEREAS, affirmative action policies adds to the potential of achieving equitable access and representation across all sectors of our diverse society, and

WHEREAS, qualified women and people of color are still underrepresented in public employment and contracting, and

WHEREAS, the government awarded five percent of federal contracts to women-owned businesses and 9.8 percent of federal contracts to minority-owned businesses in 2017 and, of the top fifty most-expensive

contracts awarded by federal government in 2016 and 2017, not a single one was awarded to a women- or minority-led business, and

WHEREAS, affirmative action allows for proactive and preemptive steps to root out discrimination prior to costly litigation, and

WHEREAS, affirmative action programs are responsible for up to a thirty-three percent increase in the number applications from people of color to higher education institutions, and

WHEREAS; since the passage of I-200 people of color have lost ground in some important areas related to education, jobs, wealth disparities and racial inequities and therefore a new, wiser effort of affirmative action, based on best practices must be passed by the House and Senate of Washington state, by the end of April 2019;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The metropolitan King County council:

- A. Expresses King County's strong support that every resident of Washington state be guaranteed equal opportunity and access to public education, public employment, and public contracting;
- B. Calls on the Washington State Legislature to adopt the Washington State Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Act (Initiative 1000) during the current 2019 session of the 66th legislature; and
- C. Directs the county's state legislative team to include the Washington State Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Act as a priority for legislative advocacy.