

1           **RESOLUTION: REFORMING WASHINGTON’S “3-STRIKES” LAW**

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3**Whereas:** RCW 9.94A.010 requires that punishment for crimes be proportionate to the  
4seriousness of the crimes and commensurate with punishment provided for similar crimes;

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6**Whereas:** Initiative 593, approved in 1993, states: “Punishments for criminal offenses should  
7be proportionate to both the seriousness of the crime and the prior criminal history. By  
8sentencing three-time most serious offenders to prison for life without the possibility of  
9parole, the people intend to: improve public safety by placing the most dangerous criminals in  
10prison.”

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12**Whereas:** RCW 9.94A, which enacts the reforms called for under Initiative 593 and is often  
13referred to as the “3-Strikes” law, includes Robbery 2 and Assault 2 on the list of “most  
14serious offenses” that trigger life imprisonment;

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16**Whereas:** Washington's Sentencing Guidelines Commission (The Commission), the state  
17agency charged with evaluating sentencing policies and recommending modifications to the  
18Governor and Legislature, recommended to the Legislature 2001 that it remove Robbery 2,  
19and consider removing some forms of Assault 2, from the list of offenses triggering life  
20imprisonment under 3-Strikes, noting that the range of behaviors associated with Robbery 2  
21and some instances of Assault 2 do not rise to the level of “most serious” offenses and that,  
22specifically, in the case of Robbery 2, these behaviors pose “little risk of physical injury”;

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24**Whereas:** Life imprisonment for crimes that are not “most serious” violates the  
25proportionality requirements of RCW 9.94A.010 and I-593, violates the intent in I-593 to  
26address the “most dangerous” criminals, is unjust to individuals serving life sentences for  
27these crimes and to their families, causes significant unnecessary expense, and reduces respect  
28for the law;

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30**Whereas:** Each year, bills to comply with the recommendations of The Commission are  
31introduced in the state legislature without success;

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33**Whereas:** Racial disparity exists throughout Washington State’s criminal justice system but  
34is perhaps at its most severe in the 3-Strikes population which comprises 45% African  
35Americans in comparison to our state population which is 3.5% African American.

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37**Whereas:** The 2006 Washington State Democratic Party platform declares the following:  
38“We also recognize that in the pursuit of civil order, we cannot abandon the legal principles  
39upon which a free and democratic society relies. We ... believe that criminal justice and  
40human rights are linked.”

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42**Therefore Be it Resolved:** That we call upon Washington’s governor and each of our state’s  
43legislators to vigorously support and defend legislation that removes Robbery 2 and any  
44Assault 2 or other offenses not reasonably qualifying as “most dangerous” and “most serious”  
45from the list of offenses that trigger life imprisonment under 3-Strikes;

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47**Furthermore be it Resolved:** That we call on Washington’s governor and each of our state’s  
48legislators to acknowledge and address the racial disparity in our criminal justice system  
49which manifests in perhaps its most extreme form among those incarcerated under  
50Washington’s 3-Strikes law, and to act with due haste to eliminate this disparity.

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52Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_precinct, \_\_\_\_\_LD/County; by \_\_\_\_\_