

EHJR 4204

Testimony: 3/15/07

Pat Montgomery

Members of the committee, my name is Pat Montgomery from Auburn, representing WA State PTA's 150,000 members. Thank you for letting us speak.

The WA State PTA strongly supports House Joint Resolution 4204.

A good portion of public education funding has long been dependent upon local levies and bonds. In fact, almost \$1 billion per year for school levies is authorized by Washington voters. This is money that many PTA members have worked long hard hours to successfully campaign for, in their local school elections.

When you drive by parents at 7:00 a.m., waving signs supporting their local school levies, you know they are PTA members! PTA members have advocated for the simple majority requirement for many, many years.

First, it is a matter of *fairness*: Other entities run levy and bonds and their success depends on a 50% plus one "yes" vote. It's time to stop treating our schools differently and remember that education is our paramount duty.

Second, it is a matter of *principle*: These issues should not be won or lost based on a minority of voters. Instead, let's embrace our democratic principles and allow a majority of voters to prevail.

Third, It is a matter of *foresight*: Our children depend on us to provide them with an education that allows them to meet high standards, and to compete in the global economy.

Education reform, technology, special needs are just some of the funding areas that challenge school districts. We must recognize that schools are increasingly dependent on levy dollars, because state-provided basic education funds simply do not meet the needs of our students.

Sen. McAuliffe, members of the Committee, the Constitution can only be amended by a vote of the people of our State. These are the voters that, in their wisdom, elected each of you.

In 1944, you allowed our grandparents to vote on Simple Majority. My grandparents would like if very much if you would allow us, once again, to vote to allow simple majority for schools.