

## Washington Promise

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3 **WHEREAS** President Obama has proposed making the first two years of community college  
4 free;

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6 **WHEREAS** Tennessee and Oregon have already passed legislation creating “promise”  
7 programs offering free tuition and fees for their state’s high school graduates;

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9 **WHEREAS** the federal Pell Grant, when initially created in the early 1970s, fully covered the  
10 costs of attending community college and now covers just 60% of the total cost of attendance;

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12 **WHEREAS** costs for community college have increased by 28 percent since 2000;

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14 **WHEREAS** community colleges provide many important unfunded programs and services,  
15 such as veterans education and transition services;

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17 **WHEREAS** community colleges play an essential role in higher education, in no small part  
18 because they serve as a pathway to postsecondary education;

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20 **WHEREAS** close to half of all students who completed a degree at a four-year institution in  
21 2013-14 had enrolled at a two-year institution at some point in the previous 10 years;

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23 **WHEREAS** community colleges are an especially important educational resource for students  
24 from low income families, as well as for adults returning to school to obtain additional  
25 training or credentials that promote workforce development;

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27 **WHEREAS** there is a gap in the supply of American workers prepared adequately for middle-  
28 skills jobs—those that require more education and training than a high school diploma but  
29 less than a four-year college degree — and this lack is hurting the U.S. middle class, as well as  
30 U.S. global competitiveness;

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32 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Democrats of Benton County, call upon  
33 Washington State House and Senate legislators to pass the legislation (HB 2820 & SB 6481)  
34 creating the Washington promise program, helping to make the first two years of college  
35 affordable and accessible to the state's citizens by offering a tuition waiver for eligible  
36 students enrolled in associate degree or certificate programs offered by the state's community  
37 and technical colleges;

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39 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that we, the Democrats of Benton County, call upon  
40 Washington State legislators to ensure that appropriations are approved to fully fund the  
41 Washington promise program.

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44 *Submitted by Richard Badalamente to the Benton County Democratic Central Committee*  
45 *3/16/2016.*