

## **Seattle Districts Now**

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For Immediate Release

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### **Seattle Districts Now submits petitions in support of 7-2 mixed system proposal for City Council Elections**

Seattle Districts Now, an activist group proposing to elect Seattle City Council members using a mixed district/at-large system, today submitted petitions containing 46,633 signatures to the Seattle City Clerk.

The Seattle Districts Now proposal would replace the current at-large City Council voting with a system of 7 representatives of geographic districts and 2 at-large representatives. Some 31,000 valid signatures are required to qualify Charter Amendment 19, the number assigned to the proposal by the City Clerk, for this November's final city election ballot.

"A Councilmember who lives in your district and knows the challenges your neighborhood faces can pass that information on to their colleagues, who can then craft solutions that serve all neighborhoods," said Sarah Moseley. "District representation would make for a better informed more connected City Council."

Julius Caesar Robinson said "Our 7-2 mixed system would increase accountability and people's access to government, while dramatically reducing the voter contact cost of running for City Council."

At-large City Council elections are expensive: In 2005, winning Council campaigns spent an average of \$205,000. By the 2011 election, that average increased to \$270,000 per winning campaign. That money is needed, because at-large candidates need to contact every voter within city limits. Seattle's current population is 617,000 people. The seven districts proposed by Seattle Districts Now would each contain about 88,000 residents.

"Right now, even when you correct for multiple-voter households, you have to knock on 93,000 doors citywide to reach every likely primary voter," said David Bloom. "Under our proposal, you can do the same job by knocking on just over 13,000 doors per district—an achievable goal for a small, underfunded campaign."

If approved by Seattle voters in November, Charter Amendment 19 would mandate that all nine Council positions would be on the ballot in 2015. The seven district representatives would be elected to four-year terms. The two at-large representatives

would be elected to two-year terms at this election and for four-year terms thereafter. This would create an election cycle under which the seven district seats would be elected at one election and the four citywide representatives (Mayor, City Attorney, and the two at-large Council members) would be elected two years later.

Seattle voters have rejected proposals to elect all nine City Council members by district in the past, but the Seattle District Now proposal differs from these earlier efforts by using a mixed system and by including as part of the proposal an initial district map drafted using guidelines set out in state law by Richard Morrill, a University of Washington Emeritus Professor of Geography.

Districts would be redrawn every ten years under the Seattle Districts Now proposal with the first redistricting done by a broad committee just five years after the first elections under the new measure.

The petitions will next be reviewed by the King County Elections Office. In order to qualify for the ballot, 30,943 valid signatures must be submitted.

Seattle Districts Now is having a major fundraiser at Fremont Mischief Distillery, 132 Canal Street on June 26 at 5:30 PM.