



KEY POINTS

- The State Supreme Court noted that the state needs \$700+ million for K-3 facility investments.
- Simple majorities within local jurisdictions for the purposes of school bonds will prevent crises due to failed bond elections under a supermajority.
- 91% of voters support investments in repairing and expanding schools.
- 77% of voters agree that “renovating existing school buildings” is an urgent need.
- High percentages of all demographic groups were in agreement on the need for renovating schools

Stan Bowman
Executive Director
bowman@aiawa.org

Phone: 360.943.6012
Fax: 360.352.1870

SUPPORT SCHOOL FACILITY INVESTMENTS

Support HB 2441/HJR 4216 and SB 5589 /SJR 8208 – Allowing for a Simple Majority of Voters to Authorize School District Levies and Bonds

House Sponsors: Haigh, Reykdal, S. Hunt, Orwall, Appleton, Pollet, Fitzgibbon, Dunshee, Ormsby, Ryu, Sells, Tarleton, Roberts, Bergquist, Goodman, Gregerson, Cody, Kagi, Santos, and Freeman

Senate Sponsors: Mullet, Kline, Eide, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles, Frockt, Keiser, Shin, and Chase

Currently, districts need a three-fifths supermajority to pass construction bonds. Previously, school levies could pass by a simple majority. HJR 4215 seeks to give voters the same choice on school construction bonds.

The super-majority requirement has left school districts with inadequate space for students because of failed bond elections with high thresholds. This places our children’s education at jeopardy. A simple majority would allow communities to be responsive to the growth they experience, as they determine.

McCleary Decision Requires School Facility Investments

In the recent Washington Supreme Court Order regarding implementation of the McCleary Decision, the Court noted that the state needs to invest in facilities. The Court states “...that additional capital expenditures of approximately \$105 million for full-day kindergarten and \$599 million for K-3 class size reduction is essential, but the State must account for the actual cost to schools of providing these components of basic education.”

State facilities investments only match that already authorized by local school districts. Providing easier access to capital funds through a lowered voting requirement for bonds would ease the burden of providing additional investment dollars, and still reserve the decision to local voters.

Americans Value Education Facility Investments

In a nationwide poll of voters conducted December 16-22, 2004, (1,000 sample, margin of error +/- 3.1) by a bi-partisan partnership of two respected national pollsters, 91 percent said that “repairing unsafe and dilapidated school buildings” was an important priority when considering on which projects the government should spend tax dollars.

Of those, a large 66 percent rated it “very important.” Further, 77 percent said they agreed with the statement, “We are in urgent need of renovating existing school buildings.” High percentages of all demographic groups were in agreement on the need for renovating schools - notably, 82 percent of women and 86 percent of Hispanics were in agreement.

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