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Strong Bipartisan Support for the Peninsula School District Bond Undermined by Pierce County Republican Party

Gig Harbor, Washington April 25, 2018 - The Peninsula School District bond election result – 58.8% voted for the bond – shows strong bipartisan support for this crucial measure, reflecting support from Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. The bond measure is badly needed to restore our school facilities to an acceptable level and address crowded conditions resulting from state mandates for smaller class sizes. So how did the measure fall short of the super-majority vote (over 60%) to pass?

The blame falls squarely on the shoulders of the Pierce County Republican Party, which funded and mailed a flyer just before the election opposing the bond measure and providing erroneous and misleading information. The 26th Legislative District Democrats (Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, Bremerton) went on record early supporting the bond measure and provided many volunteer hours as well as dollars to support the bond. All the Democratic candidates running for office in November from this district – Derek Young for County Council, Emily Randall for State Senate, and Connie FitzPatrick and Joy Stanford for the two State Representative seats – endorsed and actively supported the bond measure. In contrast, Gig Harbor Republican Randy Boss organized the “No” campaign and actively opposed the bond. None of the legislative representatives from this district, all Republicans – Jan Angel, Jesse Young, and Michelle Caldier – endorsed or supported the bond. This is a disgrace and does not reflect the views of the electorate here, regardless of party affiliation.

The bond campaign epitomized democracy at its best – with people from all parties and backgrounds working together on behalf of our schools. Those who voted for this bond should consider their vote carefully in November and support candidates who are aligned with the interests of this district. The Republican incumbents need to be turned out so that the state legislators reflect the will of the district.

The bond measure was a result of a year-long effort by the School Board and parents collaborating to look at all the options and develop a bond measure with bipartisan appeal. The campaign to pass the bond reflected a strong grass roots effort led and organized by Stand Up for Peninsula Schools (SUP), a parent volunteer organization. Many volunteers worked countless hours every weekend for the past several months going door to door to talk to citizens and explain the bond measure. In addition, the Peninsula Schools Superintendent gave many presentations throughout the district to present the facts of why this bond measure was so crucial and answer questions. It was a well-executed campaign.

The 26th Legislative District Democrats will continue to support efforts to pass a bond measure in the Peninsula School District as well as in the South Kitsap School District.

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