



For Immediate Release

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Benton, Grant and Douglas County Republican parties support lawsuit for parents' rights

The Republican parties of Benton, Grant and Douglas counties have passed a joint resolution endorsing a lawsuit by the Citizen Action Defense Fund against the state regarding House Bill 1296.

The parties issued the following statement: *"We fully support the litigation initiated by the **Citizen Action Defense Fund** in the name of Washington parents, school board members, and educators stating that House Bill 1296 (2025) is unconstitutional. That it unlawfully strips parents of their right to know and limits their ability to make decisions about their children's education and welfare."*

The Citizen Action Defense Fund filed its lawsuit Oct. 23 in Thurston County Superior Court. HB 1296, passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Bob Ferguson earlier this year, gutted and rewrote Initiative 2081 (the Parents' Bill of Rights) which received 449,646 petition signatures in 2023 and was passed by the Legislature in 2024 instead of being placed on a statewide ballot. Petitions are now underway for a new initiative, IL26-001, that would re-enact 2081.

HB 1296 limits what schools can tell parents about their children. Citizen Action says it violates parents' rights, religious freedom, the single-subject rule of the state Constitution, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and federal law.

Subsequent to the filing of the lawsuit, precinct committee officers of Benton, Grant and Douglas Republican parties passed the resolution of support in separate meetings.

The resolution states that the process of creating HB 1296 "exemplifies government overreach advancing a centralized educational system inconsistent with the principles of local control and parental authority."

The Inslee-Ferguson regime and its elected and non-elected provocateurs have now displaced government overreach with a platform for a dystopian, Orwellian-style form of government that invites a No Kings Rally, the chairmen of the three parties agreed.

"This subjugation of Parents' rights has led to an ideology that parents' children, are in essence, assets of the state. This is greatly disturbing," said Victor Lombardi, Grant County GOP chairman. "It is not just parents' rights that are the issue for our PCOs. We are seeing school board directors being greatly limited in their capacity of their original design."

Benton County GOP Chairman Dave Comstock has repeatedly questioned the limiting of rights of citizens and parents to determine their children's education. "It is with parents' taxes that these schools actually exist. And yet the state led by Superintendant Chris Reykdal has determined that his radical educational system is the correct route to pursue," Comstock said.

"What are the results? Abysmal and rapidly declining test scores, young males in girls locker rooms, and parents wondering every day about the safety of their children. Isn't this the specific reason we have elections for school board positions?"

Douglas County Republican Chairman Dan Wheat said parents have the right to know about all facets of their child's welfare and education while in a state-run institution because parents are the true legal guardians of their children not the state.

"A lot of people are outraged at the Democratic Party's charade of governance. They ignore the will of the people and continue to force their way," Wheat said.

The three chairmen said they would like to see more Republican County parties join in supporting the Citizen Action Defense Fund litigation.

Resolution of Support for the Citizen Action Defense Fund Litigation Opposing House Bill 1296 (2025)

Whereas, the Precinct Committee Officers (PCOs) of the Republican County Parties of Benton, Grant, and Douglas Counties recognize the importance of protecting parental rights and transparency in education; and

Whereas, the Citizen Action Defense Fund has initiated litigation on behalf of Washington parents, school board members, and educators, asserting that House Bill 1296 (2025) is unconstitutional because it unlawfully strips parents of their right to know and limits their ability to make decisions regarding their children's education and welfare; and

Whereas, the process surrounding the creation of House Bill 1296 exemplifies government overreach, advancing a centralized educational system inconsistent with the principles of local control and parental authority; and

Whereas, the Inslee–Ferguson administration and its legislative allies have disregarded the voices of citizens and elected school board officials, establishing policies that undermine parental oversight and student safety; and

Whereas, Washington State Senate Majority Leader Jamie Pederson (D) stated, after the House Education Committee rejected an amendment by Republican Rep. Travis Couture would require districts to immediately notify parents if their child is a victim of sexual misconduct by a school employee, "If they are old enough to get pregnant, they're old enough to make their own decisions about what happens with their bodies, and parents do not have the right to change that."

Whereas, citizens and PCOs across Benton, Grant, and Douglas Counties have publicly declared their opposition to this intrusive and overreaching approach to education; and

Whereas, Grant County Republican Chairman Victor Lombardi has stated that the erosion of parents' rights reflects an ideology that treats children as assets of the State, which is deeply troubling and unacceptable; and

Whereas, Benton County Republican Chairman Dave Comstock has noted that schools exist through parents' tax dollars, yet state leadership under Superintendent Reykdal has advanced radical policies that have resulted in declining academic outcomes, loss of student safety, and increasing parental concern; and

Whereas, Douglas County Republican Chairman Dan Wheat has affirmed that half a million legally documented Washington voters called to end this educational overreach through their initiative signatures, yet state officials in Olympia have disregarded the will of the people;

Resolved, that the Republican County Parties of Benton, Grant, and Douglas Counties express their full and unwavering support for the Plaintiffs represented by the Citizen Action Defense Fund in their legal challenge against House Bill 1296; and

Resolved, that these county organizations call upon all Republican County Parties throughout Washington State to join in rejecting House Bill 1296 and defending the fundamental rights of parents to guide the education and welfare of their children; and

Resolved, that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Citizen Action Defense Fund, the Washington State Republican Party, and other interested county organizations for their consideration and support.

Adopted by the Precinct Committee Officers of the Republican County Parties of Benton, Grant, and Douglas Counties finalized on November 6th, 2025. (Ink signatures on file)

David Comstock David Comstock Chairman, Benton County Republican Party

Victor Lombardi Victor Lombardi Chairman, Grant County Republican Party

Dan Wheat Dan Wheat Chairman, Douglas County Republican Party