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Senate Judiciary Committee  
Subcommittee on the Constitution

Dear Chairman Feingold and Chairman Conyers,

As the chief elections official for the State of Washington I am writing in support of Senate Joint Resolution 7, a constitutional amendment concerning Senate vacancies. As it stands now, a single person has the power to appoint the position of a United States Senator upon the creation of a vacancy. I argue our democratic system was built on the right of the people to elect such an important position.

In my 31 years of public service I have seen firsthand how candidates running for any office are required to have a strong working knowledge of the issues and circumstances facing their constituencies. It is critical to a thriving democracy for its representatives to answer directly to the people.

Permitting a single partisan official to hand-pick a U.S. Senator is unfair to the voters. It creates an incumbency and, therefore, gives a disproportionate advantage at the next election.

Direct participation of our citizens in electing their representatives to the different arms of government is the lifeblood of the American form of democracy. I support and strongly urge the passage of this constitutional amendment.

Sincerely,

SAM REED  
Secretary of State