

State Supreme Court's education rulings: our unusual constitution at play

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The article "[Judicial activists, or just different](#)," [Page One, Sept. 13] mentions political ideology, perceived partisan allegiances, campaign donations and political insensitivity by the present state Supreme Court justices. But it fails to mention what drives these decisions, and what makes our governmental structure and governing law in Washington very different from almost every other state: our state constitution.

Our unusual constitution is what makes our political and legal system different. The constitution provides that the "paramount duty" of the state is to provide adequate public schools. That is what governed the McCleary school funding decision. There is no other governmental function so defined in the constitution.

So, too, with the "common schools" provision that compelled the court's ruling in the charter schools case. I voted for the charter schools initiative. I think there should be room in our educational system for innovation and originality, which may be impossible in the present public-school system given the requirements of elected boards of education and the many institutional interests bringing pressure to bear on school boards and administrators.

But I've read the court's decision thoroughly and am convinced it is well-grounded and based on the pertinent constitutional provisions. Any other decision could only have been based on political ideology and not our supreme law.

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