*Draft resolution for consideration by unions, community groups and other organizations*

**Resolution: Seattle Needs Rent Control**

*(long form)*

WHEREAS, Seattle is in the throes of a stunning and unprecedented affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Sky-high rents are driving working-class households, seniors, students, and especially working families of color out of our city, and sometimes into homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the loss of affordable housing in Seattle is a crisis deeply impacting the lives of people throughout our city and region and disproportionately harms people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, indigenous peoples’ communities, disabled community members, and women, who already struggle against entrenched inequality; and

WHEREAS, even as Seattle has experienced a record-breaking construction boom, being recognized as the nation’s [construction crane capital three years running](https://www.planetizen.com/news/2018/07/99708-construction-crane-capital-united-states-seattle), the housing crisis has worsened, showing that the for-profit market has failed working people; and

WHEREAS, [average rents in Seattle has risen 69%](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/hoping-for-seattle-area-rents-to-get-cheap-dont-hold-your-breath/) since 2010, far beyond the rate of inflation and more than double the national average, so that now [46% of Seattle renters are officially rent burdened](https://seattle.curbed.com/2018/6/25/17501872/seattle-area-housing-cost-burden); and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that rising rent increases homelessness. On average, in urban areas, [each $100 increase in the average rent causes a 15% increase in homelessness](https://www.kitsapdailynews.com/news/state-for-every-100-increase-in-the-average-rent-homelessness-increases-15-to-32-percent/); and

WHEREAS, [average rent in Seattle as of April 2019 is $2,167/month](https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-seattle-rent-trends/), meaning a household needs an income greater than $86,000/year to avoid being rent-burdened in a typical Seattle apartment; and

WHEREAS, this puts average apartments out of reach for teachers, bus and truck drivers, healthcare workers, construction workers, city employees, restaurant and bar workers, and a slew of other workers who daily make Seattle run, and furthermore is driving out seniors and others who survive on fixed incomes; and

WHEREAS, more than [4,280 students in Seattle Public Schools are homeless or have unstable housing](https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/for-seattles-homeless-students-a-lack-of-housing-is-just-the-beginning/); and

WHEREAS, thousands of Seattle renters face eviction threats every year, and [a recent study by the Seattle Women’s Commission and the King County Bar Association’s Housing Justice Project](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/evictions-in-seattle-often-over-a-months-rent-or-less-add-to-homeless-crisis-report-finds/) showed that more than half of Seattle renters hit with eviction notices last year owed one month’s rent or less, and many tenants who are ultimately evicted wind up homeless; and

WHEREAS, the same study showed that evictions in Seattle fall disproportionately on women and people of color, as while people of color constitute about 35 percent of renters, nearly 52 percent of evictions involved people of color; and

WHEREAS, housing is a human right and Seattle urgently needs bold public policy to solve the crisis; and

WHEREAS, when coupled with a serious expansion of social housing (publicly-owned affordable housing), cities with rent control policies that include all rental homes rather than a small subset, such as Montreal, have been able to keep rents affordable; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing movement for rent control and social housing. [New York activists just won landmark statewide rent control legislation](https://maketheroadny.org/landmark-deal-reached-on-rent-protections-for-tenants-in-n-y/) that closed loopholes and expanded tenant rights, [Oregon passed a version of rent control](https://www.oregonlive.com/politics/2019/02/oregons-rent-control-passage-galvanizes-activists-across-us.html) in February of this year, California passed one in September, and Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has now made a proposal for national rent control, while cities up and down the west coast, from [Vancouver, BC](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-16/the-taxes-that-sent-vancouver-s-luxury-housing-market-reeling) to [California](https://www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-tech-referendum-20181102-story.html), have raised taxes on wealthy corporations to build affordable social housing; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has banned any form of residential rent control since 1981 when, under corporate real estate lobby influence, a law was passed in Olympia stating “No city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged”; and

WHEREAS, On April 15, renter rights advocates from the Tenants Union of Washington State, the City of Seattle Renters Commission, union members, renters organizing their buildings, immigrant rights activists, socialists, and Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant announced plans to advocate for a citywide rent control ordinance in Seattle this year, that would become effective the moment the State Legislature lifts the rent control ban; and

WHEREAS, over the following months, activists in Seattle have collected more than 12,000 signatures from fellow residents demanding that the City take action on rent control, and

WHEREAS, on July 20, more than 400 people came out to All Pilgrims Christian Church to be part of the movement for rent control, including community leaders, union members, and renters representing a wide array of Seattle’s working class and marginalized communities.

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle Renters’ Commission, and other organizations such as the Seattle Education Association, the UAW 4121, WFSE 1488, the Tenants Union of Washington, Mazaska Talks, Transit Riders Union, Socialist Alternaive, Nickelsville, and Be:Seattle, among others, have endorsed the call for universal rent control legislation in Seattle, free of corporate loopholes,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** finds that addressing the rapid loss of affordable housing in Seattle is of paramount importance to our members and residents of Seattle, and we fully support efforts to expand the development of affordable social housing, and universal rent control policies free of corporate loopholes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** urges the Seattle City Council and the Mayor to provide urgent protection to all renters against exorbitant rent increases, by adopting a comprehensive citywide rent control policy, free of corporate loopholes, effective the moment Washington State repeals its rent control ban; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** commits to urge its members to sign the rent control petition sponsored by Councilmember Kshama Sawant, and turn out as able for **INSERT ACTION/EVENT**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** urges the Washington State Legislature to lift the statewide ban on rent control by repealing RCW 32.21.830.