



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

December 12, 2016

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Governor Inslee,


The City of Seattle adopted a \$15 minimum wage, mandatory safe and sick time, and many other labor standards that are essential for maintaining a basic quality of life. In line with these values, we respectfully request the state provide an equitable standard of living for all employees by providing “geographic pay” to employees who are directly funded by the state to provide essential services contracted by the state in communities throughout our state that have higher cost of living. Supported Living providers for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to be funded by the state at a rate that only allows for a starting wage of \$11.13 in King County, which results in a turnover rate of 50.1%. Necessary funding has not been allocated by the legislature to address the shortfall in funding to address this minimum wage requirement, and this has further destabilized this vital safety net service.

The State of Washington has already acknowledged that there are high-cost areas through its own established per diem rates that reimburse employees for hotel and meal costs at a higher rate in those areas. In addition, the Washington State Patrol has established geographical pay as a percentage above base pay for troopers and lieutenants in recognition of the higher cost of living in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties. The Washington State Attorney General’s Office also pays its legal assistant classified positions in King County 15 percent more than the same classified legal assistant positions at other state agencies with offices in King County. Additionally, the state has established hourly benchmark reimbursement rates for supported living based upon Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and non-MSA regions, as well as higher rates for King County due to the higher cost of living. However, this differential pay is only 3.6% higher in King County compared to the MSA reimbursement, which is far less than the cost of living difference, the 15% allotted by the Attorney General’s Office noted above, or the over 36% difference in the minimum wage after the passage of the statewide initiative.


We the undersigned members of the Seattle City Council respectfully request that you include increased funding to bring the hourly reimbursement rate for supported living providers to a level that meets the 15 dollar minimum wage in Seattle, which will help address the inequities faced by supported living employees living in high-cost areas. The Community Residential Services Association (CRSA) has put forward a \$26.1M GF-S request this upcoming session to fund local providers at the Seattle Minimum Wage mandate, which is part of the larger \$84.9M GF-S


statewide request. We urge your support of the funding increase for Supported Living providers in Seattle in order to retain this vital network of providers for our Seattle citizens with developmental disabilities. We respect the work that these dedicated employees provide to some of our most vulnerable citizens and we urge you to address these inequalities and ensure that these valued employees across contracted agencies are compensated fairly.

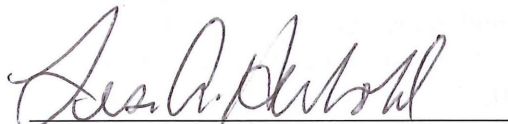
Sincerely,


Council President Bruce Harrell

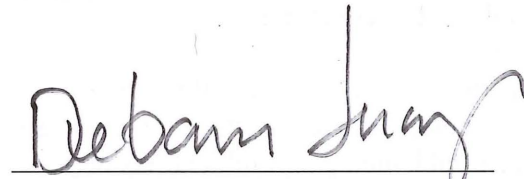

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw


Councilmember Tim Burgess



Councilmember M. Lorena González


Councilmember Lisa Herbold


Councilmember Rob Johnson


Councilmember Debora Juarez


Councilmember Mike O'Brien


Councilmember Kshama Sawant