



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Seattle Women's Commission

May 16, 2016

To the Honorable Mayor Murray and Councilmembers,

It is our responsibility as the Seattle Women's Commission to advocate for the women of Seattle, which includes advocacy related to threats, intimidation, and acts of violence against women.

We are writing to express our concern regarding the targeted messages that our women Councilmembers received following the vote on May 2, 2016 in relation to the vacation of Occidental Avenue for a proposed sports stadium project. The comments made directly via e-mail, in person, and via telephone, as well as indirectly via online platforms to the women Councilmembers are wholly unacceptable and demonstrative of sexist attitudes and beliefs that still persist in Seattle. Vulgar verbal abuse is hurled far too regularly on our streets, in workplaces, and especially on the internet. Whether women are governing a city or living their lives, these types of threatening, demeaning, and sexist abuse are unacceptable and have no place in public discourse.

This incident with our Councilmembers being the subject of a highly visible and public bombardment of misogynistic actions *simply for doing their jobs* allows us to bring to light the fact that women across Seattle endure these types of threatening, unwanted, and sexist verbal and written attacks on a daily basis in every area of their lives.

We must not turn away from this reality as this incident fades from the headlines.

As the Commissioners of the Seattle Women's Commission:

We stand with the women of our City Council to reject this aggression and concur with the Seattle Human Rights Commission to call for investigation into threats that have occurred in order to protect the safety and human rights of Councilmembers Bagshaw, Gonzalez, Herbold, Juarez, Sawant and their staff members.

We stand with the full Council, the Mayor, and our community leaders who have condemned this rhetoric and call for an end to gender-based threats.

And finally, we stand with all those in our city who endure gender-based threats, violence, abuse, and discrimination.

*Signed on behalf of and in unanimous concurrence with all serving Commissioners,*

Jaron Reed Goddard, Co-Chair

Nicki Olivier Hellenkamp, Co-Chair

*Teresa Springer*

Teresa Springer, Co-Chair