



City of Seattle

Ed Murray, Mayor

Seattle Women's Commission

November 19, 2015

Councilmember _____
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Councilmember _____,

The Seattle Women's Commission has recently approved our 2016 work plan. Our top, multi-year legislative priority is paid family leave. We stood with Mayor Murray and the City Council when you passed four weeks of paid family leave. At the time, the Council and the Women's Commission agreed that this was just a start, and 12 weeks was the ultimate goal.

You can imagine our surprise when we heard that a proposal to allocate funds that would help to start the passage and implementation of a 12 week paid family leave program was voted down during the Council budget meeting on November 16th.

This issue is one of the top economic issues in Seattle and nationwide. As you are well aware, the United States is the only developed nation in the world that does not offer paid family leave.

We also stood with the Mayor and the Council when a commitment was made to address the gender wage gap for city employees, resulting in the creation of the Gender Justice Initiative to start to address the wage gap and opportunity gap issues for women city wide. We cannot hope to make real progress in these areas without addressing the pressing need for paid family leave.

With nearly 50% of Washingtonians making less than \$40,000 per year, it is no surprise that families cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Multiple studies indicate that lack of access to this benefit puts infant health at risk, and fuels a long-existing gender wage gap - 1 in 5 women simply drop out of the workforce for years after having a child.

If we are serious about eliminating the gender wage gap and fighting for economic security of Seattle families, we must include paid family leave as a legislative priority. Paid family leave is one of the best and most effective solutions for solving the gender pay gap.

We have stood with you many times and we ask you to now stand with us and the rest of the women of Seattle. We ask you to lead as an employer, and show

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Seattle as a leader in the nation. We ask you to prioritize women and their families over a loan repayment that is not required, for a plot of land that the City eventually plans to sell. Take this step and show that you are not only committed to evaluating and studying ways to address the needs of women and families, but that you are willing to fund them as well.

Please join Councilmembers Sawant, O'Brien, Licata and Bagshaw in putting funds towards building a 12 week paid family leave program for city workers.

Sincerely,



Jaron Reed Goddard, Co-Chair
Seattle Women's Commission



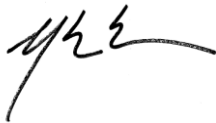
Liz Kellogg, Co-Chair
Seattle Women's Commission



Nicki Olivier Hellencamp, Co-Chair
Seattle Women's Commission



Mercedes Elizalde,
Former Co-Chair
Seattle Women's Commission



Morgan Beach, Commissioner
Chair, Economic Opportunities Committee
Seattle Women's Commission

cc: Patty Lally, Director, Seattle Office for Civil Rights