## 2018 Seattle City Council Green Sheet

**Ready for Notebook** 

Tab	Action	Option	Version
386	1	Α	1

**Budget Action Title:** Pass C.B. 119120 amending removal provisions for the next SOCR Director

confirmed by Council

Ongoing: No

Has CIP Amendment: No Has Budget Proviso: No

Primary Sponsor: Herbold, Lisa

Councilmembers:

Staff Analyst: Asha Venkataraman

Council Bill or Resolution: C.B. 119120

Date		Total	SB	KH	LG	ВН	LH	RJ	DJ	МО	KS
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

## **Budget Action description:**

This green sheet recommends passage of Council Bill (C.B.) 119120, amending removal provisions for the next Director of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) confirmed by Council.

## **Background**

During the September 12, 2017 meeting of the committee on Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development & Arts, Central Staff presented an overview of challenges faced by SOCR and concerns in the community and the City about its design and structure. At the request of committee members to consider changes during the 2018 budget process, SOCR staff provided input to Central Staff and Councilmember staff regarding the timing and short-term changes needed to complete a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) over the next 12 months. The RET would explore a potential change to the design and structure of the Office, specifically to increase distance between the Office and the Executive, through a process informed by affected stakeholders (including but not limited to SOCR staff, City leadership, City employees, the wider non-City community, and communities most impacted). The goal of the RET is to create recommendations to Council regarding future design and structure.

Two main considerations informed Central Staff, Councilmember staff, and SOCR about short-term changes needed to ensure success of the RET: (1) insulating the RET from any undue influence; and (2) building in sufficient time and resources to conduct the RET. This approach can safeguard the RET process from potential conflicts of interest under a future administration.

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C.B. 119120 addresses the need to insulate the RET from undue influence and it revises the code to provide the next SOCR Director confirmed by Council with just cause removal protections and a limited term. The bill also requires that the future Mayor consult with SOCR staff and the SOCR commissions about appointment and removal.

Having a department director subject to for cause rather than at will removal is not unprecedented, as directors such as the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation and the Director of the Department of Human Resources are also subject to for cause protection. Additionally, this change is intended to affect the SOCR Director in the short-term. Given Council's intent to consider legislation regarding the permanent structure and design of SOCR, the term, removal provisions, or even existence of a director position may change in 2018.