

Dear Seattle City Council Members,


In November 2012, a few hundred courageous New York City fast food workers walked off the job, demanding \$15 and a union. In the months following, fast food workers in dozens of other cities – including Seattle – joined them, igniting a national movement that would grow to include low-wage workers across all industries. When Seattle and Seatac voted to pass the country's first \$15 minimum wage laws, you showed workers that their aspirations were achievable, and set the stage for millions of workers in New York, California, and around the country to win a path to \$15.

You have the chance to once again lead the nation by passing a labor standards fee to fund enforcement of the \$15 minimum wage and other pro-worker laws. Already, other cities and states are looking to Seattle's enforcement approach, which combines a city-run Office of Labor Standards with funding for community-based worker organizations, as a model. Now more than ever it is imperative that low wage workers, particularly women and people of color, have access to such organizations that can help them advocate for their rights at work. Passing the labor standards fee would ensure that this vital work is funded not just now but in the years to come.

The Fight for \$15 movement has started to put a dent in income inequality, and has challenged the notion that the economy works from the top down. In fact, working people know that the economy works best when we build it from the middle out: when workers have more money to spend, we all do better. But if workers don't actually receive what they are owed – if wage theft goes unchecked – then workers and our broader economy will suffer.

Working families around the country are grateful that the Seattle City Council and Mayor led the way in being the first to pass a \$15 minimum wage. Please take the next step in this struggle and enact the labor standards fee to make \$15 work for everyone.

In unity,



Mary Kay Henry
SEIU, International President



Nick Hanauer



Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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November 15, 2016

Via Email: lisa.herbold@seattle.gov

Lisa Herbold, District 1
Seattle City Council
600 4th Avenue, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Labor Standards Fee

Dear Councilmember Herbold,

We applaud the ongoing commitment of the Seattle City Council to implement and enforce the City's signature labor laws, including the \$15 minimum wage, sick leave, fair chance employment, wage theft, and now secure scheduling. First, these laws continue to significantly improve the lives of low-wage workers in a city that is increasingly becoming unaffordable. Second, our labor laws have demonstrated to the country that progressive cities can take the lead in passing policies that not only reduce overall income inequality, but also reduce disparities in income for women, people of color, and immigrants.

We now ask that you make a long-term commitment to ensuring the \$15 minimum wage and the other labor laws work for workers by passing the labor standards fee. There is still much work to be done — 72% of all workers and 91% of immigrant workers in Seattle aren't aware of their rights on the job. We must continue to lead the way nationally on this issue. One study showed that more money is stolen from workers through wage theft every year than is stolen in all property crimes combined.

The Seattle model of enforcing our labor laws starts with training employees and employers about their rights through outreach by community-based organizations. Through culturally and linguistically relevant methods, the City's community partners have reached thousands of workers and helped many recover wages from their employers directly. Most of these workers have never had access to meaningful education on labor standards even though they are more likely to be victims of wage theft. Educating workers so they can directly engage with their employers is an incredibly cost-effective means to enforce labor standards. Funding for the outreach performed by community organizations is integral to ensuring compliance and must be supported by the labor standards fee.

Dale Bright, President • Stefan Moritz, Vice President • Nicole Grant, Executive Secretary

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Under the labor standards fee as proposed, small employers pay a smaller fee while large employers pay more, matching the City's decision to enact stricter standards on minimum wage, sick leave, and scheduling for larger employers. Contrary to what some are saying, the fee is not a head tax; it is neither charged on a per-employee basis, nor is it a tax. The labor standards fee is a regulatory fee similar to fees charged in industries from health care to construction to fund compliance with regulations.

Once again, we appreciate all your efforts on behalf of workers. It has made a huge difference, both locally and nationally. Passing the labor standards fee will demonstrate to workers that Seattle has a long-term commitment to making \$15, sick leave, fair chance and scheduling real for workers. We ask that you vote in favor of the labor standards fee, and include funding of worker outreach by community organizations in the fee.

Sincerely,

M.L. King County Labor Council

SEIU 775

21 Progress

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Seattle Chapter

Community Alliance for Global Justice

Fair Work Center

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Puget Sound Chapter

Latino Community Fund

LGBTQ Allyship

National Employment Law Project

One America

Planned Parenthood Votes NW

Pride at Work

Puget Sound SAGE

Rainier Beach Action Coalition

ROC Seattle VFA

Sailors' Union of the Pacific, Seattle Branch

Teamsters 117

Teamsters 174

UAW 4121

Washington State Labor Council

Working Washington

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Congress of Industrial
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AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

November 16, 2016

Dear Seattle City Council Members,

In November 2012, fast food workers walked off the job in Brooklyn, demanding \$15 and a union. In the months following, fast food workers in other cities including Seattle would follow, igniting a national movement that would grow to include low-wage workers across all industries. When Seattle and Seatac voted to pass the country's first \$15 minimum wage laws, you showed workers that their aspirations were achievable, and set the stage for millions of workers to win a path to \$15 in New York, California, and around the country.

You have the chance to once again to lead the nation by passing a labor standards fee to fund enforcement of the minimum wage and other pro-worker laws. Already, other cities and states are looking to the Seattle model of enforcing \$15 through a combination of a city Office of Labor Standards and funding community-based worker organizations. Now more than ever it is imperative that low wage workers, particularly women and people of color, have access to organizations that can help them advocate for their rights at work. Passing the labor standards fee would ensure that this vital work is funded not just now but in the years to come.

The \$15 movement has started to put a dent in income inequality, and has rebutted the notion that the economy works from the top down. We know that the economy works best when we build it from the middle out – when workers have more money to spend, we all do better. But if workers don't actually receive what they are owed – if wage theft goes unchecked – then workers and our broader economy will suffer.

Our movement is eternally grateful for the work the Seattle City Council and the mayor has done in being the first to pass a \$15 minimum wage. Please take the next step in this struggle and enact the labor standards fee to make \$15 work for everyone.

Sincerely,

Tefere A Gebre
Executive Vice President