

November 13, 2017

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

We write to express our strong opposition to the proposed tax on jobs in Seattle.

Our city's homelessness crisis is serious and urgent. We know that too many people in our community are disconnected from shelter, housing, and services that they need and are living in unhealthy and unsafe conditions. We will not solve this problem – over a decade in the making – with a hastily developed proposal to tax the very businesses that are creating employment opportunities in Seattle.

We need a compassionate and effective approach to solving homelessness.

This proposed tax on jobs is not that, and comes on top of significant increases in business taxes, fees and utility rates that the Council has adopted in the last three years. In 2018, Seattle businesses will contribute a record amount of taxes – nearly 60 percent of the city's total general fund budget. Your recent actions have increased the cost of running businesses, increased costs for customers, and resulted in thinner profit margins across many industries. These realities and your actions threaten the viability of many long-time Seattle businesses.

The Council has taken many of these actions without input from employers in Seattle. This latest proposal to tax jobs follows this pattern. It was developed behind closed doors without the involvement of business owners and operators. Those of us who have taken the time out of our work days to attempt to testify and express our point of view in Council Chambers have either been shouted down or found the public comment period shortened or rescheduled. We want to speak, but the threat of bullying or the fear of wasting time, does not give us confidence that you are interested in listening.

As our city taxes have increased and as you have put a record amount of city money toward homelessness, we've all witnessed the problem get worse. City spending on homelessness has increased by \$24 million dollars in the last four years alone and the 2018 budget proposes a record \$63 million in homelessness spending. All the while, more people are sleeping in doorways, more people are living in parks and greenbelts, and more people are spending nights in cars.

Clearly we need a different approach.

Today, we face one of our toughest challenges yet – to dramatically reduce the number of people who are homeless in Seattle. A new, hastily proposed tax, coupled with finger-pointing and tired political rhetoric, won't make a meaningful and lasting difference for the thousands of people outside tonight.

We urge you to oppose taxing jobs and, instead, develop a more inclusive and thoughtful approach to this serious community crisis. We look forward to engaging with you in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Jim Miller
Millionair Club Charity

Pamela Banks
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Jana deVarona
Fresh Ideas Inc.

Christian Snell
Downtown House Cleaning

Eric C. Paulus
Eric's Garage Inc.

Vernon C. Bennett, CPA
VCB Consulting & Accounting Services, LLC

Jill Nelson
Hot Diggity! Pet Sitting

Roy Whitehead
Washington Federal

Lisa Michaud
Two Big Blondes Plus Size Consignment

Allegra Calder
BERK Consulting

Juergen Oswald
Hilton Seattle

Bruce P. Sprague
Invisible Man Editing/ Roadmap Resumes

Timothy Tomlinson
Tomlinson Linen Service

Roz Edison
Marination

Katherine Dee
Glow Medispa

Diane Skwiercz
Streets Treats

Sally Shultz
Sally Schultz Co. Commercial Mortgage Broker

Tony Cameron, CPA
TL;DR Accounting LLC

Brian Dressel
Aurora Plumbing and Electric Supply, Inc.

Stephen Nevett
Dr. Stephen Nevett & Associates, PC

KC Franks
(Lux) Pot Shop

Courean Napolitano
Vixen Day Spa & Boutique

Todd Carden
Elliott Bay Brewing Co.

Claudia Meyer-Newman
Magnolia Village Studio

Deb Bluestein
Modele's Inc.

Quentin Kuhrau
Unico Properties

Jeff Pelletier
Board & Vellum

Louise Little
University Book Store, Inc.

Stephen Fickenscher
ASF Insurance and Financial Services

Chris Tudor
Travelodge by Seattle Center

Mardee Austin
Mbelleish Designs

Taylor Hoang
Pho Cyclo Cafe

David Livingston
Windward Communications Group

Jennifer Cue
Jones Soda

Dr. Susanne L. Gee
Skin Doc Shop

David Watkins
Inn at the Market

Carol K. Nelson
Key Bank

Kevin & Cary Clark
Argosy Cruises

Chad Mackay
Fire & Vine Hospitality

Alan Alabastro
Alabastro Photography

Pat Callahan
Urban Renaissance Group LLC/Touchstone

Sarah J. Schmitt
EJK Accounting & Tax Services

Kent Hendricks
HB Management LLC

Jack McCullough
McCullough Hill Leary, PS

Craig Schafer
Hotel Andra

Harley Brow
Harley F. Brow, CPA

Greg Johnson
Wright Runstad & Co.

Bill Weisfield
Elliott Bay Asset Solutions

Todd V. Biesold
Merlino Foods

Wil Lavaris
Buffalo Industries

Jim Spady
Dick's Drive-In Restaurants

Jon and Shannon Felix
Avalon Glassworks

Tim Baker
San Fermo & Percy's and Co.

H.S. Wright III
Seattle Hospitality Group

Bob Donegan
Ivar's

Tom Douglas
Tom Douglas Restaurants

Bill Weise
Silver Cloud Hotel - Seattle Stadium

Jim Rowe
Consolidated Restaurants

Matt Galvin
Pagliacci

Carla Murray
Marriott International

Evelyne Rozner
Rozner Company

John Teutsch
Teutsch Partners, LLC

Austin Cohn
CBRE, Inc

Zahoor Ahmed
R.C. Hedreen Co.

Brian Canlis
Canlis

Rene Neidhart
Renaissance Seattle Hotel

Charles Stone
Fisher Marantz Stone

Bernie Griffin
5th Avenue Theatre

Brian Zaugg
The Mediterranean Inn

Kent Hendricks
HB Management LLC

Richard Hill
W Hotel

Judith Runstad
Foster Pepper

Harley Broe
Harley F. Broe, CPA

Tim Engle
Saltchuk

Ryan Suddendorf
Evergreens Salad

Jeff Garfield
Bedrooms & More

Michael Danford
Pike Grocery

Kayla Boehme
Pipe & Row

Stan Savage, Jr.
A.F. Gilmore Co.

Howard Behar
Seattle Business Leader

Craig Dawson
Retail Lockbox, Inc.

Jill Mackie
Vigor

Dan Coyne
Darigold

Kandie Jennings
Tom's Automotive Service

Lara Olsha
The Sweet Spot

Lisa Power
Lisa Power Salon

Patrick Gordon
ZGF Architects, LLP

Christopher Gaynor
Capitol Hill Medicine

Charlie and Cindy Martin
Seattle Pinball Museum

Kevin Topping
Top Tax Services

Marilyn Boss
Marsh USA, Inc