



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

April 3, 2017

US Senator Patty Murray
154 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

US Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Re: Seattle City Council Opposes Judge Gorsuch Appointment to Supreme Court

Dear Sen. Murray and Sen. Cantwell,

As members of the Seattle City Council, we support your opposition to the appointment of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the United States Supreme Court and encourage you to stand with your colleagues to lead the fight against it.

Based on Judge Gorsuch's record, he would likely become the fifth vote of a deeply conservative majority on the Supreme Court. Given that Gorsuch is 49 years old and this would be a life-time appointment, his confirmation would create a U.S. Supreme Court conservative majority that could prevail for decades. A court with a deeply conservative bent could take our Supreme Court's rulings in directions that reverse decades of progress we have made here in Seattle and in Washington State to protect civil rights and create and uphold laws that advance social and environmental justice.

The City of Seattle, along with the State of Washington, has been a national leader in ensuring open government and campaign finance transparency, protecting public education, expanding women's and workers' rights, supporting the rights of LGBTQ residents, and combating climate change. These laws would be under direct threat of being eroded or potentially overturned by a Roberts-Gorsuch Supreme Court.

Here are some of the warning signs of a Gorsuch appointment.

- In *Hobby Lobby v. Sebelius*, Gorsuch favored the rights of a for-profit corporation at the expense of a woman's right to choose.
- In *Young v. Dillon Companies, Inc.*, Gorsuch ruled in favor of a corporation over an African-American employee who accused his employer of racial discrimination.
- Gorsuch has written in favor of limiting and even rescinding the federal government's authority to regulate the economy, environment and private corporations.

Even though *Roe v. Wade* protects a woman's right to reproductive choice, that right has been chipped away by conservative legislatures in many states over the past four decades. Federal court challenges on state laws happen regularly. A carefully balanced Supreme Court has been the last line of defense in upholding *Roe v. Wade*. But a conservative majority in power for decades would likely have dozens of opportunities to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Residents of the City of Seattle and Washington State have helped lead the way nationally in support of gay marriage, which was ultimately upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Conservative judges and elected officials still pose legal challenges to gay marriage, and there are now challenges to the rights of states to protect transgender people. Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear a case of a public-school student who sought to use the bathroom that matches his gender identity. This reverts this civil rights issue back to the state courts, creating a risk that the rights of transgender individuals will not be protected in every state under the "equal protection" clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The City of Seattle has been a national leader on labor rights including minimum-wage protections and union rights for public employees. A conservative court could undermine prior Supreme Court precedents that give states the constitutional authority to pass such laws. Last year the U.S. Supreme Court was poised to overturn the *Abood* precedent that gives unions the resources to represent all employees as required by law.

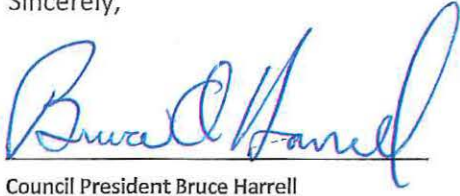
On the environmental front, the city of Seattle has been a leader in pursuing clean-energy. The U.S. Supreme Court's future rulings on these laws and regulations will play a pivotal role in our nation's ability to tackle climate risks associated with carbon emissions. This is threatened under a Supreme Court governed by a conservative majority.

Although the Gorsuch nomination comes from a new President, we cannot forget that the U.S. Senate Republican Majority refused to even grant hearings to Judge Merrick Garland, who was nominated a year ago by the former President. The Senate Majority has suffered no consequences for its unprecedented and historic obstruction of a legitimate nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court.

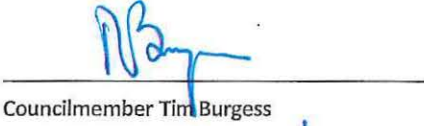
A Gorsuch appointment carries plenty of risks to the future of civil rights and social and environmental justice in the United States.

Your leadership in defeating Gorsuch's appointment is critical. This appointment will represent a historic turning point for the future direction of the U.S. Supreme Court, our country, and our City. Thank you for your service to our nation. We know you will stand up for the rights of all our people.

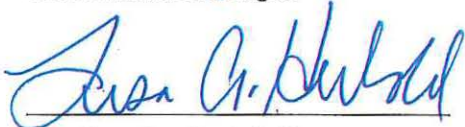
Sincerely,



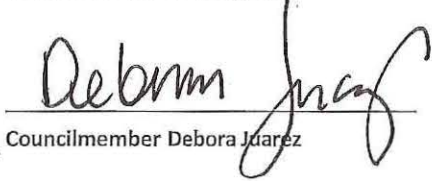
Council President Bruce Harrell



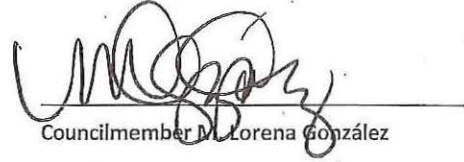
Councilmember Tim Burgess



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



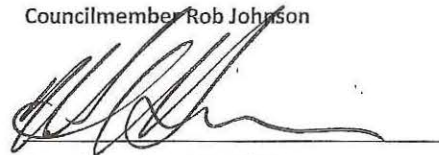
Councilmember Debora Juarez



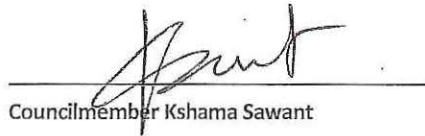
Councilmember Lorena González



Councilmember Rob Johnson



Councilmember Mike O'Brien



Councilmember Kshama Sawant