*Draft resolution for consideration by unions, community groups and other organizations*

**Resolution: Tax Amazon to Build Social Housing**

WHEREAS, Seattle is in the throes of a stunning and unprecedented unaffordable housing and homelessness crisis. Sky-high rents are driving working-class households, seniors, students, and especially working families of color out of our city, and sometimes into homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the loss of affordable housing in Seattle is a crisis deeply impacting the lives of people throughout our city and region and disproportionately harms people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, indigenous peoples’ communities, disabled community members, and women, who already struggle against entrenched inequality; and

WHEREAS, even as Seattle has experienced a record-breaking construction boom, being recognized as the nation’s [construction crane capital three years running](https://www.planetizen.com/news/2018/07/99708-construction-crane-capital-united-states-seattle), the housing crisis has worsened, showing that the for-profit market has failed working people; and

WHEREAS, [average rents in Seattle has risen 69%](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/hoping-for-seattle-area-rents-to-get-cheap-dont-hold-your-breath/) since 2010, far beyond the rate of inflation and more than double the national average, so that now [46% of Seattle renters are officially rent burdened](https://seattle.curbed.com/2018/6/25/17501872/seattle-area-housing-cost-burden); and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that rising rent increases homelessness. On average, in urban areas, [each $100 increase in the average rent causes a 15% increase in homelessness](https://www.kitsapdailynews.com/news/state-for-every-100-increase-in-the-average-rent-homelessness-increases-15-to-32-percent/); and

WHEREAS, [average rent in Seattle as of April 2019 is $2,167/month](https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-seattle-rent-trends/), meaning a household needs an income greater than $86,000/year to avoid being rent-burdened in a typical Seattle apartment; and

WHEREAS, [a family seeking to become homeowners must earn at least $114,000/year](https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-you-need-to-make-to-afford-mortgage-salary-2019-6) in order to afford an average mortgage today; and

WHEREAS, this puts housing out of reach for teachers, bus and truck drivers, healthcare workers, construction workers, city employees, restaurant and bar workers, and a slew of other workers who daily make Seattle run, and furthermore is driving out seniors and others who survive on fixed incomes; and

WHEREAS, more than [4,280 students in Seattle Public Schools are homeless or have unstable housing](https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/for-seattles-homeless-students-a-lack-of-housing-is-just-the-beginning/); and

WHEREAS, thousands of Seattle renters face eviction threats every year, and [a recent study by the Seattle Women’s Commission and the King County Bar Association’s Housing Justice Project](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/evictions-in-seattle-often-over-a-months-rent-or-less-add-to-homeless-crisis-report-finds/) showed that more than half of Seattle renters hit with eviction notices last year owed one month’s rent or less, and that nearly 9 out of every 10 tenants who are ultimately evicted wind up homeless; and

WHEREAS, the same study showed that evictions in Seattle fall disproportionately on women and people of color, as while people of color constitute about 35 percent of renters, nearly 52 percent of evictions involved people of color; and

WHEREAS, this is not just a housing issues, but also is an issue of climate justice, as when people are economically evicted from Seattle and forced to make long daily commutes into work, this increases carbon emissions and has a negative impact on the climate; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Progressive Revenue Task Force estimated that [the city needs approximately $5.1 billion in new revenue](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Council/Issues/ProgressiveRevenueTaskforce/Report-of-the-Progressive-Revenue-Taskforce-03-09-2018.pdf) to build the number of affordable houses that are needed by today’s residents; and

WHEREAS, housing is a human right and Seattle urgently needs bold public policy to solve the crisis; and

WHEREAS, Seattle is home to some of the wealthiest, most profitable corporations in history, including [Amazon, which made record profits of $11.2 billion in 2018, paid no federal taxes, and indeed received a tax rebate of $129 million](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/feb/15/amazon-tax-bill-2018-no-taxes-despite-billions-profit), for a net tax rate of minus 1 percent; and

WHEREAS, even many of the high tech workers employed in Seattle by Amazon, Google, Facebook and other companies are themselves struggling over housing costs; and

WHEREAS, two years ago, a broad social movement in Seattle called for taxing Amazon and other big businesses to fund affordable housing and social services; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 2018 the Seattle City Council passed a very modest tax on big businesses, but within a month repealed the measure after Amazon, the Chamber of Commerce, other big businesses, and the political and media establishment launched an all-out assault on the measure, falsely claiming it was a “tax on jobs;” and

WHEREAS, in the months following the City Council’s repeal of the modest tax, all of the corporate threats have been proven to be patently false; and

WHEREAS, voters in the City of Seattle just went through an election in which Amazon and their corporate allies recruited and backed candidates who were opposed to taxing big business to fund housing and services, and spent a record $4.5 million dollars to try to defeat socialist Councilmember Kshama Sawant and a number of other progressive City Council candidates; and

WHEREAS, this election was broadly seen as a proxy vote on whether or not big corporations like Amazon needed to pay their fair share in taxes in order for Seattle to make serious investments in housing and social services, or whether the city would continue its business-as-usual approach that only deepens the housing crisis for working people and families; and

WHEREAS, the corporate efforts to sway the vote utterly failed, with Sawant winning reelection and other progressive candidates also gaining office, at the expense of the corporate-back candidates; and

WHEREAS, there is tremendous, broad public enthusiasm in the wake of the election to tax Amazon and other big businesses in order to fund affordable housing;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** finds that

With the housing unaffordability and homelessness crisis reaching epic proportions, we need to build thousands of new homes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** joins with the broad movement to demand social housing that is union-built, publicly-controlled, permanently affordable and broadly available to working people, students, retirees, and people experiencing homelessness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** joins calls for building a movement to Tax Amazon and the other super-wealthy corporations in Seattle, who are raking in tens of billions in profits annually, to fund this new housing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** recognizes taxing Amazon and other major corporations to build housing is a matter not just of housing and economic justice, but also is a matter of racial and climate justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** recognizes we need to build a powerful movement in order to win the biggest tax possible, whether we do so through legislation or at the ballot box; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** also recognizes that as we fight to Tax Amazon we must enact measures like rent control as well as massive affordable housing construction, in order to win a city that is affordable for all; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, **INSERT** **ORGANIZATION NAME** commits to working with other unions, community and faith groups, communities of color, LGBTQ and immigrant communities, and others to win the biggest possible tax in 2020 on Amazon and other major corporations.