



CITY OF SEATTLE

February 5, 2018

Senate Majority Leader Nelson
PO Box 40434
Olympia, WA 98504-0434

Dear Leader Nelson:

Thank you for the opportunity to convey the City of Seattle's strong support for SB 6406, which would repeal Initiative 200 ("I-200") and restore fair treatment of under-represented groups in public employment, education, and contracting. The City of Seattle supports strong policies to build inclusive and equitable communities that do not enable discrimination.

In 2016, the State of Washington, spent about \$5.4 billion on goods, services, and contracts. According to the [Washington State Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises](#) ("WMBE"), State spending on WMBE contractors was \$156 million or less than three percent of the total eligible spending, a drop in the bucket. The reality is that WMBE firms are not experiencing a level playing field given the institutional and historical discrimination that women and people of color have faced in our country. Instead, I-200 has enhanced and entrenched discrimination in Washington State rather than eliminating it. In fact, I-200 has had a chilling effect on the economic development of the companies throughout the state that cities and other public agencies rely on to provide goods, services, and capital projects. The people of the state lose out when there is less competition and public agencies are strapped in terms of their ability to create an equitable environment for WMBE businesses to participate in public contracting.

Furthermore, I-200 has impacted admissions to public universities and overall employment opportunities. I-200 promised to stop discrimination in college admissions based on race. Instead, it has set up other roadblocks at a time when public colleges and universities need to foster more diversity in order to prepare our students to compete in a global economy. It should be a public policy priority to ensure every individual has an equitable opportunity to succeed. The reality is that people so often get jobs based on the privilege of who they know and their college networks, and this unfairly disadvantages people of color, women, and the LGBTQ community, who historically have not had similar opportunities to advance.

The City of Seattle is united in its support for SB 6406, and we urge you to pass this important legislation this session. We must restore public trust, and I-200 continues to undermine our ability to build a more fair and equitable city.


Sincerely,

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

Council President Bruce A. Harrell

City Attorney Pete Holmes

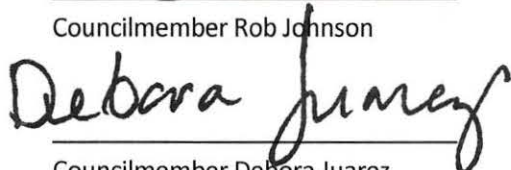
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw



Councilmember M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold


Councilmember Rob Johnson


Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda


Councilmember Debora Juarez


Councilmember Mike O'Brien


Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Cc: Senator Carlyle; Senator Chase; Senator Frockt; Senator Hasegawa; Senator Pedersen; Senator Saldaña