



City of Seattle

Edward Murray, Mayor

Seattle Women's Commission

July 20, 2017

Attn:

Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Kshama Sawant
Councilmember Rob Johnson
Councilmember Debora Juarez
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez

In support of CB 118984

Dear Councilmembers,

The Women's Commission is grateful for the interest and responsiveness that the City Council, and Councilmember Herbold have shown to this piece of legislation, addressing the size and composition of the City of Seattle's Civil Rights Commissions.

We believe political climates, such as the one we are experiencing today, clearly demonstrate the need for robust and active independent advisory bodies; they are a critical component to the protection of citizens and their rights at every level of government. The Women's Commission has been lucky to have a total of 21 members for some time. It has allowed us to convene a broad cross section of gender equity advocates and help achieve key policies that benefit the women and families of Seattle. These include major achievements like the public breast-feeding ordinance, All Gender Restroom Ordinance, Paid Sick & Safe Leave, the Seattle Preschool Program, Ban the Box legislation, and many more. We have been able to accomplish this level of advocacy and effectiveness by having sufficient capacity as an all-volunteer Commission.

We would like to impress upon the City Council and Mayor, that all the Civil Rights Commissions of our city should have the same capacity, and hope you will pass CB118984 to increase the membership of the LGBTQ Commission, the Commission for People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Commission to 21 members as well.

We also hope you will pass this legislation with the reallocation of appointed seats to allot 8 seats to the Mayor's office for appointment, 8 seats to the City Council, 1 to

810 Third Avenue, Suite 750, Seattle, WA 98104-1627

Tel: (206) 684-4500, Fax: (206) 684-0332, TYY (206) 684-4503, website <http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/>

An equal opportunity - affirmative action employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided upon request.

the Get Engaged program, and 4 to the Commission itself. The increase from 2 Commission appointed seats to 4 is a critical piece of this Legislation. It is the experience of the Women's Commission that the seats that are appointed with more transparency in their selection process, as Commission appointed seats are, have Commissioners that have served their full terms more consistently than other appointees. It also allows for Commission seats to be filled faster when an opening does arise.

As the Civil Rights Commissions are charged with advising the Mayor & City Council, as well as City Departments, on issues affecting the communities we represent, it is paramount that we are representative of and accountable to the residents and workers of Seattle. Increasing our independent Commission appointed seats will show the community that you are interested in building strong, autonomous bodies charged with holding City government accountable for the protection of their civil rights and liberties.

Thank you, and we hope this legislation will pass as we see it as a strong step forward in building institutions to protect civil rights in Seattle.

Sincerely,

Idabelle Fosse, Co Chair, Seattle Women's Commission
Morgan Beach, Co Chair, Seattle Women's Commission
Teresa Springer, Co Chair, Seattle Women's Commission
Tracey Whitten, Co Chair, Seattle Women's Commission