

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A SEATTLE INCOME TAX

WHEREAS Seattle residents participate in the most regressive state and local tax system in the country, putting an unfair burden on poor and middle-class residents while protecting and reinforcing the privileges of the wealthy; and

WHEREAS, for example, Washington residents with incomes below \$21,000 pay 16.8% of their income in state and local taxes and those with incomes between \$40,000 and \$65,000 pay 10.1% of their income in such taxes, while residents with incomes between \$200,000 and \$500,000 pay only 4.6% of their income in such taxes and those with incomes in excess of \$500,000 pay only 2.4%; and

WHEREAS the Washington State Legislature, has repeatedly failed to give serious consideration to a statewide income tax, thereby failing to provide the constitutionally required “ample provision” for education of all Washington-resident children; and

WHEREAS between 8% and 10% of households in Seattle have annual incomes over \$200,000; and

WHEREAS right now, local income taxes are levied by counties and/or cities in 4,983 jurisdictions across the United States; and

WHEREAS the City of Seattle can pioneer a legal pathway to a fairer, more progressive and more reliably robust state tax system; and

WHEREAS the revenues from an income tax could be dedicated to the underfunded public services, including housing and homelessness, multifamily housing preservation and weatherization, college student housing, multimodal transit and green jobs as well as replacing federal revenue lost from budget cuts; and

WHEREAS RCW 35A.11.050 provides that the general grant of municipal power conferred on cities by RCW Chapter 35A “is intended to confer the greatest power of local self-government consistent with the Constitution of this state and shall be construed liberally in favor of such cities”; and

WHEREAS RCW 35A.11.020 provides, in part, that “the legislative body of each code city shall have all powers possible for a city or town to have under the Constitution of this state, and not specifically denied to code cities by law”, and that “Within constitutional limitations, legislative bodies of code cities shall have within their territorial limits all powers of taxation for local purposes except those which are expressly preempted by the state as provided in RCW 66.08.120, 82.36.440, 48.14.020, and 48.14.080”; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Seattle City Council to enact an ordinance implementing a municipal income tax on the wealthiest residents – e.g., 1.5% on individual incomes in excess of \$250,000 per year, etc., as proposed by the [Trump-Proof Seattle Coalition](#) – thereby setting an example for other Washington cities and forging a pathway to tax justice in our state.

Adopted May 23, 2017 by the King County Democratic Central Committee

Originated by John Burbank, Economic Opportunity Institute john@eoionline.org
Edited by Dean Fournier, demdean48@gmail.com and Sarajane Siegfriedt, sarajane3h@comcast.net and submitted 5/4/17