

Resolution Opposing Big Money PAC Influence in Seattle Elections

WHEREAS unlimited corporate PAC spending at all levels of the U.S. electoral process has undermined our nation's democracy and accorded undue influence to large corporations and the super-rich; and

WHEREAS Seattle voters approved a first-in-the-nation Democracy Voucher program with the dual goals of publicly funding our elections while lowering contribution limits and placing caps on the amounts raised directly by campaigns; and

WHEREAS three PACs funded by big business and wealthy individuals in Seattle – the Chamber of Commerce PAC (CASE, to which Amazon alone gave \$450,000) and the misleadingly named People for Seattle PAC and Moms for Seattle PAC – have together raised an unprecedented \$1.63 million, with much more expected, to try and sway the outcome of the Seattle City Council elections; and

WHEREAS allowing big money interests to wield more influence in Seattle elections than the vast majority of voters will likely result in a bias against progressive taxation, making it more difficult for Seattle to raise needed revenues; and

WHEREAS an independent study completed by McKinsey & Co. for the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce showed necessary revenues to address the homelessness and housing affordability crisis to be at least \$400 million annually; and

WHEREAS the majority of the expenditures by the three above-mentioned PACs has been spent on racist, sexist, and deceptive mailers intended to depress the vote for progressive candidates; and

WHEREAS PAC spending this year has already undermined Seattle's democratic process in that, as reported by Crosscut, "candidates who saw PAC spending in opposition to their campaigns underperformed expectations"; and

WHEREAS large unregulated independent expenditures undermine Seattle's Democracy Voucher program by dwarfing the amounts candidates are allowed to raise under the program, while releasing the PACs' favored candidates from spending limits and causing others to stay out of the program in anticipation of large amounts being spent against them;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we oppose the undue influence of PACs funded by big-money interests in Seattle, including the Chamber of Commerce PAC (CASE) and the so-called People for Seattle PAC and Moms for Seattle PAC, and we call on them to cease their efforts to influence elections through racist, sexist, and other negative or deceptive campaigning; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on all candidates and elected officials in Seattle to unite in public opposition to big-money PAC spending in Seattle elections, and to publicly commit to not seek support from such groups and to publicly reject any spending thereby on their behalf; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support (1) the proposed ordinance introduced by Seattle City Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez, to limit corporate PAC contributions, and (2) immediate further action to expose and mitigate the influence of big-money PAC spending on the 2019 Seattle City Council elections; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to all current Seattle City Council Members and candidates for Seattle City Council.

Adopted September 24, 2019, by the Martin Luther King County Democratic Central Committee

Originated by Amy Madden, Jessi Murray, and Ellen Eades, LD43