



City of Seattle

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

TRANSMITTAL VIA E-MAIL

June 30, 2020

Council President M. Lorena González
Seattle City Council
600 Fourth Ave. 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA, 98104

Dear Council President González:

The City's residents and businesses expect us to work on many important issues together, including unprecedented challenges, such as a global pandemic that is worsening in our city, an economic downturn that could become the worst economic event in our city's history, and a civil rights movement in our streets. The public deserves to see their government working together to resolve differences and face these challenges.

As leaders of the City, it is incumbent upon all of us to bring people together in one of the City's most challenging times. However, I have deep concerns about the continued actions of a Councilmember that I am requesting that you and the Council exercise your duties as described below. I completely respect that any of us may disagree on policy issues, sometimes strongly. Disagreements on policy contribute to a robust public debate. However, policy disagreements do not justify a Councilmember who potentially uses their position in violation of law or who recklessly undermines the safety of others, all for political theatre.

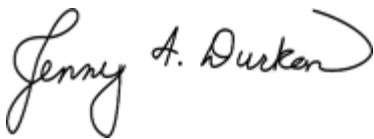
Article IV, Section 4 provides the Council may punish or expel a member for disorderly or otherwise contemptuous behavior. Some of these violations may be additional violations of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, but all of these falls within City Council's purview. The City Council may choose to ignore and dismiss her actions, but I think that undermines public confidence in our institutions. This letter requests that the Council exercise its Charter duties and fully investigate Councilmember Kshama Sawant and determine if action should be taken for the following:

- Relinquishing authority of her office and disregarding City employment and hiring rules. In Councilmember Sawant's case the media has uncovered documents suggesting that she may have effectively delegated decisions regarding hiring and termination of City employees to an outside political organization. According to the documents, the National Executive Committee and the Seattle Executive Committee of the Socialist Alternative party had authority over staffing decisions for the City Council office. At least one employee was allegedly fired as the result of a decision of the Executive Committee of this political organization, and that employee protested that the firing was the result of political retaliation. See [here](#) and [here](#).

- Using her official office and equipment to promote and raise money for a ballot initiative (or other electioneering), and for failing to comply with public disclosure of all funds raised and spent in those activities including a website registered to her husband and promoted by Councilmember Sawant. While the SEEC (and possibly the PDC) continues to investigate, I believe it is imperative that Council conduct its own inquiry. This is important for public confidence and because it could also impact Council's work on proposed related revenue ordinances pending before Council, as one is explicitly tied to the proposed ballot initiative. The public has a right to know that public resources of the Council are not being used in violation of campaign and ethics laws.
- Using her official position, gave access to City facilities to admit hundreds of individuals at night into City Hall when it was closed to the public because of COVID-19 and failing to follow the City's COVID-19 precautions for the visitors. Her actions put the safety of individuals and City workers at risk, and it led to janitorial staff making complaints about the incident because of safety concerns.
- Using her official position and possibly staff to encourage attendants at a rally she led on June 28, 2020 to illegally "occupy" City property, the East Precinct, at a time the City has been trying to de-escalate the situation and ask individuals to depart because of violence in the area. Days earlier, members of the Black community had asked that this facility be restored as an active police facility, particularly in light of the fact it was created at the request of the Black community by actions of former Councilmember Sam Smith to serve the Central District. We have had a series of devastating gun violence around this location, including early yesterday morning on Capitol Hill. (Photo attached)
- Using her official position to lead a march to my home, despite the fact that it was publicly known I was not there, and she and organizers knew that my address was protected under the state confidentiality program because of threats against me due largely to my work as U.S. Attorney. All of us have joined hundreds of demonstrations across the City, but Councilmember Sawant and her followers chose to do so with reckless disregard of the safety of my family and children. In addition, during or after Councilmember Sawant's speech at that rally, her followers vandalized my home by spray-painting obscenities. (Photo attached)

We have much to do together. I appreciate all you have done on that front as Council President, and I remain committed to continuing to work productively with you and Council.

Respectfully,



Jenny Durkan
Mayor of Seattle

CC: Councilmembers
Lisa Herbold
Tammy J. Morales
Kshama Sawant

Alex Pedersen

Debra Juarez

Dan Strauss

Andrew J. Lewis

Teresa Mosqueda

Wayne Barnett, Executive Director of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission



6/28

CALL TO ACTION

HOLD OUR LEVERAGE

Calling all allies as well as BIPOC with clear minds to immediately camp/occupy in front of the East Precinct.

Please bring any camping supplies with you and be ready to collaborate towards creating a safe camping/occupying experience.

THIS IS A CALL TO PEACEFULLY OCCUPY THE EAST PRECINCT UNTIL

- 1.** SPD is defunded by 50%
- 2.** Those funds are redistributed to BIPOC Communities
- 3.** All protestors receive amnesty