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**Sent:** Friday, July 07, 2017 2:04 PM

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**Subject:** CB 118984

Good afternoon councilmembers,

I'm writing regarding CB 118984, which is scheduled for a Full Council vote on Monday. This legislation would increase the membership and change the appointment authority for the Seattle Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Commission, Commission for People with DisAbilities, and Seattle Women's Commission.

This legislation would expand the size of the Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Commission, and Commission for People with DisAbilities from 16 members to 21 members per commission, which would bring them in alignment with the 21-member Seattle Women's Commission. The Mayor supports this proposal. A memo from the four commissions asserted this change would allow them to better plan programming activities, improve commission skills and diversity, and to better collaborate with city departments and officials. We agree.

However, the Mayor does not support the legislation's proposed changes to how commission members would be selected, specifically by greatly expanding the number of members selected by the commission itself, as opposed to the normal Mayor and Council appointment process. Typically, appointments to boards and commissions are split on a 50-50 basis between the Mayor and Council. This makes sense, as board and commission members are appointed to serve in an advisory role to the Mayor and Council (this legislation itself notes that these four commissions serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, Council, and City departments). Given that advisory boards and commissions provide guidance to the Mayor and Council on policy and other issues, the ability to retain appointing authority is of importance.

This legislation would allow each of the four commissions to self-appoint 4 members. Our research indicates that of the 70 City boards and commissions, this would be unprecedented. Currently, a handful of boards and commissions are authorized to self-appoint 1 of their members, while the Women's Commission and Community Involvement Commission are authorized to self-appoint 2. We suggest aligning the Human Rights, LGBTQ, and DisAbilities Commission with the Women's Commission and authorizing each commission to self-appoint 2 members, instead of 4. (Note: while our new police accountability legislation authorizes the Community Police Commission to self-appoint 7 members, the CPC is not an advisory board or commission and instead is an independent body with different roles, contains substantial powers, and is not an accurate comparison in this case.)

We understand that one reason for this proposal is that several of the commissions have experienced vacancies which have gone unfilled by the Mayor and Council for prolonged periods. We are committed to improving this issue, but do not feel that the solution is to increase the number of commission-appointed members. Instead, we suggest an amendment that indicates vacancies should be filled within a certain window of time.

The Mayor deeply values the contributions each of the four commissions makes to the City, and wants to support their work. However, he does not support the legislation in its current form. We urge a modification to the legislation prior to sending the bill to the Mayor.

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