

46th District Democrats
PO Box 15435
Seattle, WA 98115-0435

Subj: Renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy

Dear Seattle City Council Member:

On April 16th, the 46th District Democrats held a forum focused on the housing needs of our most vulnerable citizens. Our guests, Adrienne Quinn, Bill Block, Rick Friedhoff and John Fox spoke about the history of the Seattle Housing Levy, and the evolution of our understanding about how much the services have been needed since the first Levy passed in 1981. We learned a great deal.

With the national economy this hard hit, and our state and local budgets following the same patterns, the number of people just holding on to survival is up all around the country. Seattle and King County have seen the numbers of homeless increase, and we know that we are only seeing the surface of the problem.

We understand there are some efforts being made to use Housing Levy dollars in any 2009 package to include those who are below average income, but not in as much danger as our homeless population. We would love to be able to provide help to everyone who needs it, no matter how little of a boost they need. But the precious dollars that are given by the residents of Seattle to help provide housing resources to our neighbors need to have a focus, and we are proud that the focus of the Housing Levy over the last few decades has been to help the most vulnerable among us. We urge that the 2009 Housing Levy continue this tradition of helping the working poor as well as the homeless..

I have attached a copy of the resolution that we passed after the forum. We would like to ask the Seattle City Council to focus the upcoming renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy on the people in our community that need the most help.

Please take the message of this resolution and the needs of our city into account when you make the decision of how to draft the Levy measure that we will see on our ballots in November.

Sincerely,

Chad Lupkes
Chair, 46th District Democrats

cc: Seattle City Council Members,
Mayor Greg Nickels
King County Democrats
Washington State Democrats

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
RENEWAL OF SEATTLE HOUSING LEVY

WHEREAS in 2002 Seattle voters approved, for a fourth time, a “Seattle Housing Levy” providing for property taxes dedicated to affordable housing for low-income persons in Seattle; and

WHEREAS the 2002 Seattle Housing Levy expires in 2009, having already exceeded, by year-end 2008, all of its 2003-2009 goals for creation and preservation of affordable rental housing and other programs to mitigate and prevent homelessness; and

WHEREAS the governments of King County, the City of Seattle and other regional municipalities; United Way of King County; and all major Seattle non-profit providers of social services for homeless people have adopted a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding great success in the creation and preservation of affordable housing, there are still over 8,000 homeless persons in our community, many of whom are veterans; and

WHEREAS current economic conditions have created additional hardships for disadvantaged persons in Seattle and caused previously employed people to become homeless despite their best efforts; and

WHEREAS the cost of the 2002 Housing Levy to an average Seattle homeowner is currently less than \$50 per year; and

WHEREAS renewal of the Housing Levy is essential for the community to continue to make progress in alleviating homelessness, as well as to encourage economic diversity,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 46th District Democrats petition the Seattle Mayor and City Council to place on the November 2009 ballot a measure for renewal of the Housing Levy; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the purpose of the levy predominantly shall be to provide low-income housing for homeless and working individuals and families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 46th District Democrats urge other Democratic organizations in Seattle, other community organizations and all fellow citizens to support and work for the passage of a renewed Housing Levy in 2009.

Submitted by Sarajane Siegfreidt and Peter Shapiro

Passed by the 46th District Democrats on April 16th, 2009