

## **Resolution Supporting Public Employees and Collective Bargaining**

**Whereas** unionized public employees at all levels of government provide essential public services, without which middle class life as enjoyed by the residents of Seattle, King County and the State of Washington would be greatly diminished, and

**Whereas** public employees provide services that are generally not profitable for the private sector, and public employees provide critical services to people of all income levels, including individuals and families who would otherwise not be able to afford them, and

**Whereas** Washington state has recognized the importance and value of laws that ensure workplace safety and the right to bargain collectively, and has the most progressive minimum-wage law in the nation as approved by voters, and

**Whereas** the State of Washington is home to 350,000 public employees working for the state, cities, counties, ports, school districts, community colleges, universities and public utilities, who have collective bargaining rights under public-sector collective bargaining statutes, and

**Whereas** King County government employs more than 13,000 and the City of Seattle employs more than 10,000 public employees who are highly skilled in their trades or professions and dedicated to providing excellent customer service, many of whom are union members, and

**Whereas** public employees throughout the nation have lost their jobs and voluntarily accepted reduced wages as a way to try and maintain the level of public services during this "Great Recession," and

**Whereas**, around the country and in all levels of government in Washington, including Seattle and King County, labor leaders, unions and their members have stepped forward to voluntarily participate in wage and benefit reductions, furloughs and other cost-saving measures to preserve the jobs of their fellow employees and assist in managing the impacts of the recession on government budgets, and have developed creative ways to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, yet many jobs have had to be eliminated, and

**Whereas** all working men and women in both public and private sectors deserve honor and respect for the work they do and should be empowered to perform their jobs efficiently and creatively with high-quality customer service, and

**Whereas** we do not support, and indeed condemn, the ongoing efforts of state leadership in Wisconsin and other states to curtail the rights of public employees to bargain collectively;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that we affirm our support for hard-working public employees and the services they provide, and support the right of public employees to organize and to bargain collectively. Further, we oppose any attempt to restrict or eliminate collective bargaining in the State of Washington and ask our state legislators and the Governor to defend the rights of workers to bargain collectively.

*Adopted April 26, 2011 by the King County Democratic Central Committee*

*Submitted by King County Councilmembers Larry Phillips and Larry Gossett, 3/23/2011  
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