



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

Sept. 6, 2021

Dear Carpenters Union sisters, brothers, and siblings:

Happy Labor Day! As a rank and file union member, a socialist, and as thrice-elected Seattle City Councilmember, I stand in solidarity with all union carpenters fighting for a good contract. By demanding that the contractors - the wealthy bosses - pay up, you are providing a fighting example to workers everywhere.

Members of my political organization, Socialist Alternative, have talked with many of you recently. We've heard how many of you are unable to afford to live where you work, in the city that you have proudly built. Many of you are commuting long distances to work - spending hours every day away from your loved ones. And then when you get to the jobsite, you have to shell out money just to park, because the contractors are too cheap to cover it.

Meanwhile, those same exploitative contractors, along with other millionaires and billionaires, have become nearly two trillion dollars richer since the pandemic began. This is capitalism.

When you win, it will be a victory for all workers, not just for carpenters and construction workers. That's because when workers in one industry organize, fight back, and win, it gives confidence to workers in other industries. Union workers nationwide and internationally are inspiring one another and starting to fight back. Currently non-union workers, like the courageous Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama, are also beginning to move into action. The American working class has a long road ahead, but history proves that we have the potential to get organized and win a better society! And in fact, that's exactly how we won Seattle's Amazon Tax to fund affordable housing and union-built Green New Deal projects, \$15/hour minimum wage, and unprecedented renters' rights victories - by our Council office fighting alongside rank-and-file workers.

That's why it's essential for healthcare workers, teachers, warehouse workers, drivers, and all workers to stand alongside you. And it's important for you to support their struggles, like the healthcare workers' fight at UW Medicine for a good contract, and the struggles of grocery workers, homecare workers, and other frontline workers for safe workplaces and hazard pay.



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Under capitalism, our workplace bosses squeeze us for every last dime so they can expand their profits. But that's not all. This system exploits the majority by also denying other basic rights like affordable, quality healthcare and housing.

If you're renting, especially, you know how corporate landlords have wasted no time jacking up rents this year, as working people came out of the worst of the pandemic. In just the last eight months, Seattle landlords have raised rents more than 25 percent! In just the last year, Tacoma landlords have jacked up rents 18 percent. Everett landlords have raised rents 13 percent.

Tell me, has your pay gone up by anything close to that?

And try buying a house: Average Seattle home prices are up 8 percent over the last year. The average house today sells for nearly \$800,000.

I urge you, as you fight for a good union contract, to join our movement to win rent control, to limit rent increases to no more than the inflation rate. Fighting for union contracts and for affordable housing are two sides of the same coin: We demand good pay from the bosses, and also limits to our housing costs. We can't win if we're not fighting for both.

On Saturday, September 18, my Council office, along with community groups and unions, is organizing a [rally to demand rent control without corporate loopholes](#). We're gathering at 4 pm at Cal Anderson Park in Seattle. Please join us!

I am committed to fight alongside you for a good union contract for all carpenters.

Solidarity!

In solidarity,

Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember