Dear,

We are writing to you today to share our strong support of the Employee Hours Tax and our appreciation of the leadership and courage you’ve shown in proposing these funds *[delete this text when emailing CM’s Johnson, Bagshaw, Harrell, and Juarez – they have not committed to supporting it]* .  The Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence represents over 40 member programs working in Seattle and King County to end gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault.  On behalf of these programs and the survivors they serve, we strongly support this bold, appropriate investment in proven solutions to homelessness in our communities.

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children, and the most overwhelming need survivors of gender-based violence in our community communicate to us is housing.  When survivors and their children have no real path to safe, stable, affordable housing, their options for escaping violence and abuse are greatly diminished.  Even those lucky enough to get short-term housing, like a motel voucher or shelter bed, feel the panic and pressure of trying to find housing before their stay comes to an end; many stay in or return to violent relationships because they simply don’t have anywhere else to go.

Housing instability and homelessness also leaves women and children more vulnerable to violence once they become homeless, with a high prevalence of sexual and physical violence.  A 2017 report on housing and homelessness found that 70% of women surveyed between the ages of 35 and 44 reported at least once type of physical or sexual violence had occurred against them in their most recent episode of homelessness.

We support this progressive tax option, which requires the businesses that profit the most in our community also contribute to our community.  We support the 80%/20% split that strengthens our city’s crisis response system while devoting the bulk of funding to increasing the amount of available affordable housing stock.  **We support you** in making this bold investment so that survivors of gender-based violence and all our homeless neighbors can access safe, stable housing for themselves and their children.

Thank you,