



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

## COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

May 19, 2017

Dear Seattle Seahawks General Manager John Schneider, Head Coach Pete Carroll, and Owner Paul Allen:

I am writing to convey that Colin Kaepernick would be welcome in Seattle, and to encourage you to take the opportunity to sign him as the Seahawks' backup quarterback.

I am not a football expert, but everything I have read strongly suggests that the only reason a player with Kaepernick's skills is still a free agent is because of the backlash against his courageous leadership last year against racism, brutality, and discrimination. If that makes other teams wary of signing him, shame on them. In Seattle, we know our communities will only benefit from his activism as well as his talents on the field.

As you know, Colin Kaepernick has been widely recognized as a leader amongst professional athletes for speaking out on social justice issues that are vital to the lives and livelihoods of regular working people, many of whom are Seahawks fans. His courage in openly and defiantly supporting the Black Lives Matter movement is not without precedent; indeed, it is reminiscent of Tommie Smith and John Carlos's historic stance for black freedom on the podium of the 1968 Olympic Games, and Muhammad Ali's refusal to participate in the war in Vietnam.

Around the country, ordinary people, activists, and especially young people, have been inspired by Kaepernick's opposition to racism, and his broad support of social justice. He has supported Meals on Wheels and other anti-hunger programs, and has spoken out against bigotry and the scapegoating of Muslims. He has provided key support to grassroots social justice organizations, including Silicon Valley De-Bug, Causa Justa/Just Cause, Urban Underground, Black Youth Project 100, Mothers Against Police Brutality, Gathering for Justice, Communities United for Police Reform, and the I Will Not Die Young Campaign.

From the fight for a \$15/hour minimum wage, to the struggle for affordable housing, to the movement against police brutality, Seattle's working people and young people have led the nation in this new era of social movements. I agree wholeheartedly with Michael Bennett that Seattle is the perfect place for Kaepernick. The NFL has an influence on the ideas and attitudes of young people. As you assemble your team, it would be a poor message for you to send to young people that speaking out against racism, police violence, and economic inequality is "toxic" and will be punished rather than applauded.

The working people of Seattle and our youth will be proud to welcome Colin Kaepernick. Please do everything in your power to sign him to the Seahawks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant

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