



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

## COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

Tuesday April 6, 2021

Dear Mayor Durkan,

I am writing to urge you to extend the moratorium on the discriminatory 72-hour parking rule (ticketing or towing cars parked for 72 hours). I was horrified to hear that you planned to resume enforcement of this rule that essentially criminalizes people for being poor and lacking affordable housing, and hassles anyone without a driveway or garage.

Under the 72-hour parking rule, anyone with a driveway or garage is not ticketed. However, for those who depend on street parking, the 72-hour rule can be extremely difficult. If you leave town for four days, you need to find a street in a neighborhood where the 72-hour rule is simply not enforced. This also reveals that the rule is unequally applied.

Things are far worse for our community members - many of them working people - who are forced to live in their cars because of the acute affordable housing crisis in our city. For them, your enforcement of the 72-hour rule can be [catastrophic](#), costing them not only their vehicle, but also their only shelter and all their possessions. During the pandemic, there is even more reason to stop this inhumane practice, as the housing crisis continues and thousands are left in the economic lurch. We need affordable, social housing - not harassment of neighbors struggling to survive.

Prior to the COVID moratorium, the city's establishment has attempted to justify the 72-hour parking ban by claiming that it is leniently enforced against people living in their vehicles. This is, of course, better than an unmitigated use of the rule to harass homeless community members. My Council office supports every effort to avoid towing people's vehicles and shelters. However, what does it say about the law if the justification for its existence is that it often is not fully enforced? Additionally, these informal arrangements of lenient enforcement are often not followed. My office has spoken with many homeless community members who have lost their shelter, work tools, and all their documents when the car they live in was towed.

My office has discussed with organizers at Real Change, and many of their vendors live in their cars. They are correctly terrified about what the reinstatement of the 72-hour parking ban will have on their lives.

My office launched a [community petition](#) Saturday evening, urging you to reinstate the moratorium. In just over 48 hours, we have received over 700 signatures and hundreds of

messages from Seattle residents who are appalled to learn that you are reinstating the parking ban. As Yolanda from North Seattle wrote, *“People who are forced to live in their cars or RVs already have it hard enough. Why make their lives even more difficult? **If you don’t want people living in their cars, make housing affordable.**”*

I join these community members in urging you to immediately extend the emergency moratorium on the 72-hour parking rule.

Instead of punishing those most affected by the economic inequality and underfunding of public resources, you should join me and working people from all backgrounds in calling for an increase in the Amazon Tax, along with progressive taxes on the rich statewide, to fund affordable housing for all and an urgent expansion of public transportation.

**I urge you to immediately extend the moratorium on the destructive and discriminatory 72-hour parking rule.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kshama Sawant', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kshama Sawant  
Seattle City Councilmember