



**City of Seattle**  
Seattle City Council

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Councilmember Kshama Sawant  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 14, 2022

Contact:  
Beatriz Lacombe, Office of Councilmember Kshama  
Sawant, (719) 648-2494

### **Sawant to Introduce Legislation to Extend Pandemic Eviction Moratorium Through End of Public Health Emergency**

***“It is stunning hypocrisy that as they prepare to unleash a wave of evictions, City Councilmembers and the Mayor are themselves still able to work remotely, from the safety and comfort of their homes, while making six-figure salaries.”***

**SEATTLE** - Councilmember Kshama Sawant (District 3, Central Seattle), chair of the Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee, released the following statement in response to Mayor Bruce Harrell's decision to end the city's pandemic eviction moratorium at the end of February. **Sawant will introduce legislation to extend the eviction moratorium through the end of the COVID public health emergency.**

“Mayor Harrell’s decision to end the pandemic moratorium is a plan to allow the eviction of thousands of working-class renters in Seattle is unacceptable and inhumane. Those facing eviction are disproportionately Black working-class renters and other communities of color. My office will introduce legislation to support our city's renters and extend the moratorium through the end of the COVID public health emergency, as renters’ rights organizations, progressive labor unions, and socialists have called for.

“Mayor Harrell claims that ‘COVID cases steadily declining’ justifies the end of the eviction moratorium. Yet the fatality rate from COVID is still frighteningly high, both in the United States and globally. In fact, the daily fatality rate is still nearly as high as during the peaks of earlier waves of the pandemic. Ending the eviction moratorium now would lead to a deadly wave of evictions, and increased homelessness, in the midst of this ongoing crisis.

“The City of Seattle is still in a state of civil emergency. But it appears that emergency measures are only for the political establishment and the wealthy, not for ordinary renters and working people. It is stunning hypocrisy that as they prepare to unleash a wave of evictions, City Councilmembers and the Mayor are themselves still able to work remotely, from the safety and comfort of their homes, while making six-figure salaries. **Democratic politicians like Mayor Harrell believe it is time for emergency measures ensuring working people’s safety to end, but emergency measures protecting the political establishment and the profits of real estate corporations should remain in place for the foreseeable future.**

“**Violet Lavatai, executive director of the Tenants Union of Washington State, said:**

*“I have news for Mayor Harrell. Unlike you, most people do not own multiple houses. In fact, nine out of ten people become homeless if they are evicted. Your decision to end the emergency moratorium benefits corporate landlords. What about the thousands of Seattle renters that will face eviction and then homelessness on March 1?”*

“Mayor Harrell’s attempts to justify this callous act by referencing past legislation is just another way of saying that he will not lift a finger to defend renters’ rights. In fact, the two-week extension to the eviction moratorium effectively means that he does not plan to extend it one day beyond Seattle’s [winter eviction ban](#) (December - February). The winter eviction ban was won by the renters’ rights movement and my office in 2020.

“When the Mayor’s press release says, ‘Mayor Harrell has directed the Office of Housing to urgently distribute over \$25 million in identified funding to support renters and small landlords,’ what it really means is that there are some rental assistance funds remaining of the \$59 million that were won by the renters’ right movement in the past. Mayor Harrell has done nothing to support those protections, and they are totally insufficient to protect thousands of renters from being sent to eviction court starting March 1, if Harrell succeeds in his plan to end the moratorium.

**“As chair of the Sustainability and Renters Rights Committee, I will be inviting renters and organizers to the committee on February 18 at 9:30am, to discuss the legislation from my office to extend the eviction moratorium through the end of the COVID emergency.”**