



## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

February 19, 2023

### Letter in Support of Seattle City Council Ordinance Prohibiting Caste Discrimination

Dear City Council:

I write today in support of the ordinance seeking to prohibit discrimination on the basis of caste or perceived caste in the city of Seattle.

Caste is a deeply entrenched hereditary discriminatory class system in India, which prohibits certain groups from interacting with others, and restricts access to educational, professional, and economic opportunities.

The evidence unequivocally shows that caste discrimination exists in workplaces in the United States, and can take the form of harassment, bias, wage theft or worse. The state of Washington itself is home to well over 150,000 South Asians, many of whom work in technology, hospitality services, and the restaurant industry. This ordinance would help ameliorate caste discrimination and provide workers a necessary and critical legal remedy.

Passing this ordinance would put Seattle on the right side of history. In recent years, a federal court, the Alphabet Workers Union and several universities have explicitly acknowledged the persistence of caste-based discrimination and supported efforts to curb it, a move reinforced by various racial justice organizations across the country. Seattle will invariably be the first of many cities that pass similar ordinances in the future.

The city council should seize this opportunity.

Yours,

Arjun Singh Sethi  
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