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*Sent via email to:
ethicsandelections@seattle.gov*

October 14, 2026

Wayne Barnett
Executive Director
Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
PO Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729

Re: SEEC Complaint against SeaFor
BIL File No. 6682-002

Dear Director Barnett,

We write on behalf of Progressive People Power (P3) PAC, a Washington continuing political committee, to file a formal complaint with the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission against Seattle Forward (SeaFor). For the reasons set forth in this complaint, P3 PAC believes that SeaFor is currently soliciting contributions for the express purpose of expending money to support a candidate in the Seattle City Council District 5 special election that is scheduled to take place November 3, 2026. SeaFor also has a major purpose to make expenditures to support candidates. SeaFor is therefore operating unlawfully as an unregistered continuing political committee. In light of the upcoming pre-election reporting deadlines, P3 PAC asks that the SEEC take immediate action to investigate SeaFor and compel registration and reporting, including public disclosure of SeaFor's contributors and expenditures to date.

Background

I. SeaFor was established earlier this year by former Seattle City Councilmembers to change electoral outcomes in the city of Seattle.

SeaFor is a Washington nonprofit corporation formed in March 2026.¹ It holds itself out publicly as a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code.² SeaFor's CEO is former Seattle City Council President Sara Nelson. Additional governors include former Seattle City Councilmember Tanya Woo, Erik Nielsen, a former policy director for Council President Nelson,³

¹ Exhibit A - Washington Secretary of State Corporations and Charities Filing System record for "SeaFor" (accessed Oct. 6, 2026).

² Exhibit B - SeaFor website published at www.seafor.live (accessed Oct. 2, 2026).

³ Exhibit C - LinkedIn Profile for Erik Nielsen (accessed Oct. 9, 2026).

and Dan McGrady, a registered lobbyist for PEMCO Insurance.⁴ Earlier this year, SeaFor launched a website, a donation page hosted by giving platform Anedot,⁵ and an affiliated “AI-powered” publication, CivicTide.⁶

As of the date of this letter, SeaFor’s activities appear primarily channeled through the SeaFor and CivicTide websites. The SeaFor website, included in full as Exhibit B to this letter, describes the organization as “a 501(c)(4) building the durable civic infrastructure for pragmatic, accountable governance: public education, policy oversight, and serious candidate support.” The express purpose and goal of this civic infrastructure is to “wag[e] the pragmatic counterinsurgency” against the “activist left,” and to elect a “pragmatic majority” of “moderate candidates” in Seattle.

Under the header “WHY SEAFOR EXISTS,” the website explains:

The activist left has built the permanent infrastructure that makes winning at the ballot box and at the dais routine: coordinated candidate pipelines, powerful media outlets, advocacy nonprofits, and labor-funded PACs. . . . SeaFor is our infrastructure play. A permanent civic organization that empowers Seattle’s majority: recruits candidates, funds their campaigns, defends them between elections, and stays in the field after November. Changing Seattle’s political culture for good.

The SeaFor website further outlines the organization’s three “workstreams” for ensuring that “pragmatic, middle-of-the road voices” are elected and retain their seats through multiple election cycles: “candidate recruitment and electoral support”; “counter-narrative and accountability journalism”; and a “weekly legislative tracker and call to action.” In other words, SeaFor’s planned work consists of direct support for candidates; public communications; and local grassroots lobbying.

II. SeaFor anticipates making both contributions and independent expenditures in support of local candidates in Seattle.

SeaFor’s website clearly indicates that the organization plans to spend money recruiting and supporting candidates. Specific areas of anticipated candidate support include training, vetting, narrative work, comms, fundraising, voter file, opposition research, debate prep, PAC and IE reporting, legal review, and “air cover.” SeaFor states that its aim is to provide candidates with “sustained backing” and “credible institutional support.”

SeaFor is also explicitly focused on the 2026 Special Election for Seattle City Council District 5 as well as the seven District-based Seattle City Council seats that will be up for election in 2027 as “the immediate opportunity” for the organization. SeaFor’s website describes the District 5 race as the “pilot

⁴ Exhibit D - 2026 PDC lobbying registration for Dan McGrady.

⁵ Exhibit E – Anedot donation page hosted at <https://secure.anedot.com/seafor/70f0ef35-0193-4820-91b4-6dae00d63f37> (accessed Oct. 2, 2026).

⁶ Exhibit F – Excerpts from CivicTide website published at www.civictide.org (accessed Oct. 2, 2026). Civic Tide is published and funded by SeaFor. *See id.* *See also* Exhibit G – Todd Bishop, *Former Seattle City Council president launches AI-powered site to track and report on City Hall* (GeekWire, Sept. 21, 2026), <https://www.geekwire.com/2026/former-seattle-city-council-president-launches-ai-powered-site-to-track-and-report-on-city-hall/> (accessed Oct. 9, 2026).

run,” “test run,” or “launch” for SeaFor’s “civic infrastructure” project. And it states: “The 2026 District 5 test run ties directly to the 2027 pragmatic majority play.” The website notes that endorsements are “COMING SOON.” A section of the website labeled “QUESTIONS DONORS ACTUALLY ASK – The blunt FAQ” indicates that the organization’s 90-day budget includes “the 2026 District 5 race.”⁷ CEO Sara Nelson also told GeekWire that the organization plans to endorse and make an independent expenditure in the District 5 race (further sharing that she has personally endorsed candidate Julie Kang).⁸ Meanwhile, the 2027 District-based City Council races are described as the “full deployment” and the “2027 pragmatic majority play.” The SeaFor website also forecasts that in 2029, the organization will target “all city-wide seats.”⁹

III. SeaFor is currently raising money for its efforts, including supporting candidates in the 2026 and 2027 city council races.

SeaFor’s website is also actively soliciting donations to support its efforts to influence the 2026 and 2027 City Council elections in Seattle. Under the header “WHY SUPPORT THIS NOW,” the website states: “Strike while the iron’s hot. 2026 D5 is the pilot. 2027 is full deployment with all seven district seats on the ballot. . . . **All donations support SeaFor’s mission of holding City Hall accountable for results.**” (Emphasis in original). This framing is immediately followed by an embedded donation form soliciting contributions with pre-set amounts ranging from \$500 to \$25,000.

SeaFor’s donation form is also separately hosted by Anedot.¹⁰ On the Anedot-hosted page, below a SeaFor logo, text reads: “Strike while the iron is hot. Fund the war chest for this year’s District 5 race and grow it for 2027 when all seven district seats are on the ballot.” This text is followed by the live donation form.

In addition to monetary donations, SeaFor also appears to be soliciting in-kind support to advance its efforts. The website states: “If money’s a problem, there are real ways to support that aren’t financial: warm intros, civic partnership, content collaboration, and so on. Tell us what you’ve got. We’re more interested in your super powers than the largest checks.” The website provides a contact box and email address to follow up with the organization.

⁷ Nelson told GeekWire the organization’s budget was \$163,000 for July through December, with \$55,000-\$65,000 going to web development and AI use, and the remainder covering the planned District 5 independent expenditure and legal costs. Exhibit G.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ It is unclear whether SeaFor’s anticipated focus in 2029 is limited to the citywide City Council seats or extends to the citywide Mayor and City Attorney races as well. In a recent radio interview following the launch of CivicTide, Nelson declined to rule out a run for Mayor and described the CivicTide project as “trying to create the conditions that are safe for a candidate like me to run,” whether or not that candidate was her. KIRO News Radio 97.3 FM, *Seattle’s Morning News with Charlie Harger & Manda Factor – Sara Nelson’s New Tool to Hold City Hall Accountable* (Sept. 26, 2026), <https://mynorthwest.com/kiro/watch/sara-nelsons-new-tool-to-hold-city-hall-accountable/01a0df16-ab80-8008-f143-458d8777fbc5> (accessed Oct. 9, 2026).

¹⁰ This separately hosted page can be accessed by clicking the “Available on hosted form” link within the embedded donation form on the SeaFor website. See Exhibit E.

IV. SeaFor also plans to publish political opinions and endorsements.

SeaFor describes its “counter-narrative and accountability journalism” workstream as including “[o]riginal commentary, curated coverage, and policy analysis.” SeaFor will publish “[p]olicy briefs, explainers, and the goings-on at City Hall from the moderate-pragmatic lane.” This work currently appears to be hosted at the CivicTide website. To date, CivicTide has published unsigned “policy briefs” and “opinion” pieces, as well as aggregated City Hall news from Seattle media outlets. CivicTide also advertises a weekly “CivicTide dispatch” email newsletter and is currently soliciting email subscribers.

SeaFor’s website states that “candidate positions, endorsements, and blunt analysis on the state of the race” will be “COMING SOON,” though it is unclear whether this content will be hosted on the SeaFor website or published through CivicTide.

V. SeaFor is already seeking to influence legislation before the City Council through its CivicTide website.

SeaFor’s third “workstream” aims to “[b]lock bad policy [and] advance pragmatic solutions” through a weekly legislation tracker and call to action. This tool is described as SeaFor’s “flagship product,” named “The Firehose.” The Firehose is “[a] bill tracker and weekly alert on what happened in committee and why you need to care about it now, with one-click ways to do something before the final vote, not after the consequences sink in: email your Councilmember, post the receipts, pitch an op-ed.” SeaFor’s website describes these action items as “[p]re-drafted, fully editable, [and] sourced.”

SeaFor’s Firehose product is illustrated on its website using “placeholder examples.” However, it appears that some version of the Firehose is already live on the CivicTide website. For example, the CivicTide website hosts an unsigned opinion piece titled: “Mayor hoarded 2026 treatment funding to pay for shelter expansion in 2027. Addiction treatment disappears in the Mayor’s shell game to balance the budget and create more shelter.”¹¹ The piece advocates for continued funding for recovery services and housing in the 2027 Seattle City budget. This opinion piece states (quoting in part from a separate policy brief on the CivicTide website),

“Providing more on-demand, recovery services means less need for shelter and permanent supportive housing. That not only makes good fiscal sense, it’s the morally right thing to do. Council could address this major gap in the city’s homelessness response in budget amendments.”

Yes, that’s a subtle hint. If we were to issue a real Call to Action, we’d say: **“Contact your Councilmember and request that they restore \$2.1M to the Promoting Public Health Budget Summary Level in HSD for the recovery services and housing listed in HSD-060-A.”**

¹¹ Exhibit H – *Mayor hoarded 2026 treatment funding to pay for shelter expansion in 2027* (CivicTide), <https://civictide.org/b/2026-w41-brief-7d20885d> (accessed Oct. 12, 2026).

But that's not really CivicTide's style. It's up to you.

(Emphasis in original). This “subtle hint” is followed by a “Take action” header and a large red button that reads “Email Council 30 SEC.” Clicking this button in turn launches a pre-drafted email to the email address council@seattle.gov with the subject line “Re: Mayor hoarded 2026 treatment funding to pay for shelter expansion in 2027.” The body of the pre-drafted email reads as follows:

Councilmembers,

I am writing about this issue: Mayor hoarded 2026 treatment funding to pay for shelter expansion in 2027.

[Add your own two sentences. What do you want council to do? Why does this affect you?]

More context and receipts: <https://civictide.org/b/2026-w41-brief-7d20885d>.

Thank you,

[Your name, neighborhood]

Other pieces published on the CivicTide site contain similar “Email Council 30 SEC” buttons that launch similar template emails to Seattle City Councilmembers. For example, a policy brief titled “As if things weren’t hard enough for Seattle residents and families, Council considers expanded regulations and penalties for households that employ domestic workers,”¹² is also followed by an “Email Council 30 SEC” button. Once again, this button auto-generates an email to council@seattle.gov with a subject line that matches the title of the story and a link back to the original CivicTide piece.

VI. SeaFor has not registered with the SEEC as a political committee or sponsor of an indirect lobbying campaign.

There is no record of SeaFor registering as a political committee with the SEEC.¹³ The SeaFor website indicates that the organization plans to set up an affiliated PAC and IE at some unspecified point in the future. There is also no record of SeaFor registering as a sponsor of an indirect lobbying campaign.¹⁴

¹² Exhibit I – *As if things weren’t hard enough for Seattle residents and families, Council considers expanded regulations and penalties for households that employ domestic workers* (Civic Tide) <https://civictide.org/b/2026-w34-cb-121266>, (accessed Oct. 12, 2026).

¹³ See 2026 Continuing Committees registered with the SEEC, <https://web6.seattle.gov/ethics/elections/campaigns.aspx?cycle=2026&type=contest&IDNum=251&leftmenu=collapsed> (accessed Oct. 12, 2026).

¹⁴ See Disclosure Reports filed by Indirect Lobbyists, <https://web6.seattle.gov/ethics/lobbying/IndirectLobbyist.aspx> (accessed Oct. 12, 2026).

VII. SeaFor tells its donors that it will not disclose their identities.

The SeaFor website repeatedly highlights donor anonymity as a feature of the organization's 501(c)(4) "civic infrastructure" model. It emphasizes that SeaFor will be able to distinguish itself from other political efforts because it provides insulated "institutional support" that "doesn't disappear when the cycle gets ugly" and "[a]ir cover that doesn't fold." Under the bullet point "leverage," the site explains: "Washington's 501(c)(4) structure protects the privacy of businesses and individuals historically punished for backing fiscally responsible causes."

SeaFor also specifically reassures donors that their identities will remain a secret. In the website section titled "QUESTIONS DONORS ACTUALLY ASK – The blunt FAQ", under the prompt "Can I support privately?" SeaFor responds:

Yes. Contributions to 501(c)(4) nonprofits are anonymous but not tax deductible. Many of our supporters operate businesses, sit on boards, or hold positions where political activity isn't tenable.

In response to the prompt "Is my contribution disclosed publicly?" SeaFor states:

Contributions to a Washington 501(c)(4) are not publicly disclosed at the donor level. PAC and independent expenditure activity, when it occurs, follows separate disclosure rules under WA PDC and SEEC. We'll walk you through which lane fits your goals before any commitment.

And, in response to the question "Is this a campaign committee?" SeaFor answers:

No. SeaFor is the 501(c)(4) civic infrastructure entity. Electoral activity runs through a separate PAC/IE structure with a clean firewall. The c4 builds the operating system. The PAC, when it operates, plays in its own clearly-marked lane.

SeaFor's Anedot-hosted donation page states, immediately above the donation form: "Donor identities are not publicly disclosed."

While the SeaFor website loosely suggests that donations for electoral activities will be channeled or segregated to ensure legal compliance, the site contains a single all-purpose donation form. This donation form is currently live and appears to be actively accepting donations without restriction.

Analysis

- I. Under Seattle law, a 501(c)(4) organization with the major purpose of raising and spending money to support candidates in local elections must register as a political committee and disclose the identity of its donors.**

Chapter 2.04 of the Seattle Municipal Code requires “political committees” to register with the City Clerk and file detailed reports of 1) all deposits and contributions; and 2) all expenditures.¹⁵ *See* SMC 2.04.160.A; SMC 2.04.230, .250–.260. A political committee is “any person . . . having the expectation of receiving contributions or making expenditures in support of, or opposition to, any candidate or any ballot proposition.” SMC 2.04.010. The term “person” is broadly defined to include, among other things, corporations, associations, and “any other organization or group of persons, however organized.” *Id.* Thus, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation can also be a political committee—irrespective of its legal structure or tax status.¹⁶ What the organization **does** (or anticipates doing) determines whether it is regulated as a political committee under Seattle law.¹⁷ Via administrative rules, the SEEC has outlined several defining activities that make a nonprofit or other entity a political committee. *See* SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 2.C.

II. SeaFor is a continuing political committee.

A. SeaFor is soliciting money for the express purpose of expending it to support a candidate.

Under SEEC rules, if a “corporation . . . or other organization or entity . . . solicits or receives any amount of money for the express purpose of contributing or expending it to support or oppose a candidate,” it is a political committee. SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 2.C.1. In other words, if an organization “ha[s] the expectation of receiving contributions” (or actually receives contributions) in support of “any candidate,” it must register as a political committee. *See* SMC 2.04.010, .160.A.1(paralleling RCW 29B.10.420, .25.020).¹⁸ This support need not be tied to a specific candidate or election. *See* SMC 2.04.010 (“continuing political committees” are political committees “of continuing existence not established in anticipation of any particular election”) (paralleling RCW 29B.10.150, .420); *see also State v. Eyman*, 24 Wn. App. 2d 795, 801–02, 840 (2022) (donations solicited to support work on unspecified ballot initiatives were contributions in support of “any ballot proposition” under state law).

A “contribution” includes, among other things, a donation, pledge, payment, or transfer of anything of value. SMC 2.04.010 (paralleling RCW 29B.10.160(1)(a)). These contributions need not be

¹⁵ This includes the names, addresses, occupations, and employers of donors, *see* SMC 2.04.250.D, .260.A.2 and all expenditures, regardless of whether they are connected to electoral political activity, *see* SMC 2.04.26.0A.6; *see also* SMC 2.04.010 (defining “expenditure” broadly).

¹⁶ For example, in *State v. Grocery Manufacturers’ Association*, 195 Wn.2d 442, 454 (2020), the court found a national trade association funded primarily through membership dues was an unregistered political committee under state law based on the Association’s efforts to solicit member contributions to defeat a Washington ballot initiative. And in *Utter v. Building Industry Association of Washington*, 182 Wn.2d 398, 427 (2015), the court found that plaintiffs raised genuine issues of material fact about whether a nonprofit industry association was a political committee under state law.

¹⁷ Seattle Municipal Code chapter 2.04 must be “liberally construed to promote complete disclosure of all information respecting the financing of political campaigns, so as to assure continuing public confidence of fairness of elections, and so as to ensure that the public interest will be fully protected.” SMC 2.04.150.B.

¹⁸ Seattle law instructs that it is the public policy of the City that “it is desirable to have legislation at the municipal level complementary to the concept of disclosure established in Title 29B RCW.” SMC 2.04.150.A.7. Seattle’s definition of “political committee” in SMC 2.04.010 is substantively identical to the “political committee” definition in RCW 29B.10.420.

earmarked by the contributor for candidate support, if the organization has made clear through its solicitations that it is raising money to provide support—directly or indirectly—to any candidate. Thus, in *State v. Eyman*, 24 Wn. App. 2d at 840, the court of appeals found that “support” included both direct and indirect support—and thus, donations solicited and received by Tim Eyman to cover his living expenses while working on ballot initiative campaigns constituted “support” for “any ballot measure.” Eyman did not solicit donations in connection with any specific initiative campaign, instead communicating that he needed donations to work on ballot initiatives generally. *Id.* at 801–02.

Here, SeaFor is actively soliciting contributions via its website and separately hosted webform for the express purpose of supporting “moderate” and “pragmatic” candidates in the 2026 District 5 City Council race, the seven 2027 District-based City Council races, and beyond—in the form of both contributions and independent expenditures. This work also includes indirect support to candidates—self-described “air cover” provided through public communications and local grassroots lobbying. Based on these solicitations, SeaFor is a political committee under SEEC rules.

B. SeaFor has a major purpose of making expenditures in support of candidates.

Under SEEC rules, an organization for which “one of the major purposes . . . is to receive contributions or to make expenditures to support . . . a candidate(s)” is a political committee. SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 2.C.3. This major purpose test involves a “totality of the circumstances” analysis that includes the following non-exhaustive factors:

- (1) Whether the organization “has, during any twelve-month period made electoral expenditures of \$5,000 or more, in the aggregate, in support or opposition to one or more City candidates”;
- (2) Whether the organization “represents that it has, or its materials state, a purpose of electing or defeating a candidate . . . or achieving a particular electoral outcome”;
- (3) Whether the organization “communicates that contributions to the [o]rganization may be used to elect or defeat a candidate . . . or to achieve a particular electoral outcome”;
- (4) Whether the organization “shares officers with a political party or candidate or ballot issue committee”;
- (5) Whether the organization “seeks to establish a party or to set up a candidate for office”;
- (6) Whether the organization “receives funds from a political party or a political caucus or political committee”;
- (7) Whether the organization “facilitates fund raising for a candidate . . . , including but not limited to providing volunteers to work for the campaign, providing a room or telephones for fund-raising”;
- (8) Whether the organization “endorses candidates to the general public, not merely to its own members”;

(9) Whether the organization “conducts surveys of voters, other than its own members, to determine how they will vote on a candidate or ballot issue”; and

(10) Whether the organization “provides to campaigns lists of targeted voters.”

SEEC Election Code Rules Rule 2.C.3.

Here, several factors weigh heavily in favor of a finding that a “major purpose” of SeaFor is to make expenditures to support candidates.

Under the first factor, SeaFor’s budget appears to anticipate spending well in excess of \$5,000 in the District 5 special election. CEO Sara Nelson’s GeekWire interview indicates that somewhere between \$98,000 - \$108,000 of SeaFor’s July – December budget of \$163,000 has been allocated for SeaFor’s planned District 5 independent expenditure and legal costs. The SeaFor website also describes the organization’s “first 90-day budget” as consisting of “[c]ounsel and other startup costs, the public website, and the 2026 District 5 race.” Even if SeaFor has budgeted \$10,000 for legal costs, that would still leave at least \$88,000 for its planned District 5 spending. Given that SeaFor’s stated purpose is electing moderate candidates to local office, the organization’s other initial spending—including the SeaFor and CivicTide websites and legal—should also be categorized as expenses in support of Seattle candidates.

Under the second factor, SeaFor’s explicit purpose is to secure electoral outcomes—the election of “pragmatic,” “moderate” City Council candidates in Seattle—through a variety of means. Therefore this factor is plainly met. Under the third factor, SeaFor has been explicitly raising money to develop a “campaign war chest” for the District 5 and 2027 District-based City Council elections. Therefore, SeaFor clearly communicates that contributions will support its electoral work. Under the fifth factor, SeaFor advertises its plans to recruit and develop candidates through a “bench pipeline” and “candidate bootcamp”—i.e., setting up a candidate for office. Under the seventh and tenth factors, SeaFor advertises that its candidate bootcamps will including fundraising and voter file support. And under the eighth factor, SeaFor has announced its plans to endorse candidates for a general public audience.

Taken together, these factors overwhelmingly indicate that a major purpose of SeaFor is to make expenditures in support of candidates, and thus SeaFor is a political committee.

C. SeaFor’s anticipated multi-year efforts make it a continuing political committee.

Seattle law recognizes a subset of political committees as “continuing political committees” because they are “not established in anticipation of any particular election.” SMC 2.04.010. SeaFor anticipates continuing to raise and spend money in the 2027 and 2029 local elections in Seattle and beyond. Therefore, it is properly categorized as a continuing political committee.

III. SeaFor failed to register with the SEEC as a continuing political committee and report its contributors and expenditures.

As a continuing political committee, SeaFor must register and regularly report to the SEEC—something it has, to date, failed to do. First, per SMC 2.04.160, it was required to file a statement of organization with the City Clerk “within two weeks after the date when they first have the expectation

of receiving contributions or making expenditures in any election campaign, or 20 days before the election, **whichever is earlier.**” (emphasis added). Thus, SeaFor was required to register with the SEEC and begin reporting within two weeks of deciding that it would raise money for or make expenditures in the District 5 special election, whichever came first.

After registering with the City Clerk, SeaFor was required to begin filing a report of “all contributions received” pursuant to prescribed timelines. SMC 2.04.250. In the months immediately preceding a special or general election, a political committee must report weekly on bank deposits made in the previous seven calendar days. SMC 2.04.250.C. **These reports must include the name and address of all contributors who have given more than \$100 in the aggregate.** SMC 2.04.250.D, .260.A.2; *see* SEEC Elections Code Administrative Rules Rule 15. **For contributors who have given more than \$250 in the aggregate, occupation and the name and location of the contributor’s employer must also be reported.** SMC 2.04.250.C, .260.A.2; *see* SEEC Elections Code Administrative Rules Rule 15.

Additionally, SeaFor was required to begin filing regular monthly reports of contributions (including any in-kind contributions) and expenditures. SMC 2.04.250.B. In the lead-up to the District 5 Special Election, pre-election reports will be due on October 13 and October 27. *See id.* **These reports must itemize all expenditures of greater than \$50 and further identify the purpose of the expenditure.** SMC 2.04.260.A.6.

To date, SeaFor has not registered with the SEEC or filed any of the reports detailed above. Instead, it has reassured its donors that it is not required to register as a “campaign committee” or to publicly disclose their identities or their contributions. Because SeaFor is, in fact, a continuing political committee, its failure to register and report its contributions and expenditures violates Seattle law. SeaFor’s reassurance of secrecy to donors who “operate businesses, sit on boards, or hold positions where public political activity isn’t tenable” also contravenes the policy of the City of Seattle that “the public’s right to know of the financing of political campaigns . . . far outweighs any right that this matter remain secret and private.” SMC 2.04.150.A.

IV. Because SeaFor is a political committee, content published by CivicTide is regulated by the SEEC.

Via its CivicTide website, SeaFor has already begun publishing unsigned opinion pieces and “policy briefs” addressing pending legislation before the Seattle City Council. SeaFor has also announced its intention to publish “candidate positions, endorsements, and blunt analysis” on the state of the Seattle City Council races in 2026 and 2027.

Seattle law broadly defines the term “contribution” to include a “transfer of anything of value.” SMC 2.04.010. An “expenditure made by any person in concert, collaboration, coordination, consultation, or cooperation with, or at the request, or suggestion of a candidate,” is considered an in-kind contribution. SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 8.B. Similarly, “expenditure” is broadly defined and specifically includes “a payment . . . for the purpose of assisting, benefitting, or honoring any public official or candidate, or assisting in furthering or opposing any election campaign.” SMC 2.04.010.

Seattle law also requires reporting of independent expenditures, *see* SMC 2.04.270—expenditures on behalf of or opposing any election campaign that are not contributions, *see* SMC 2.04.010. Independent expenditures typically include uncoordinated political advertising—including articles or “other means of mass communication, used for the purpose of appealing, directly or indirectly, for votes or for financial or other support in any election campaign.” SMC 2.04.010. Political advertising must in turn contain a sponsor identification that indicates the political committee or other entity paying for the advertising and their top contributors. *See* SMC 2.04.290.B.

Under limited circumstances, media published for the purpose of supporting or opposing candidates is excepted from the SEEC’s regulation of contributions, independent expenditures, and political advertising. A “contribution” does not include a “news, feature, or editorial comment in a broadcast media program or in a regularly scheduled issue of a printed periodical that communicates ratings, evaluations, endorsements, or recommendations for or against a candidate . . . ; PROVIDED, that the medium is controlled by a person whose primary business is broadcasting or publishing, **and this person is not a candidate or political committee.**” SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 1.E (emphasis added). And “political advertising” does not include “letters to the editor, news or feature articles, editorial comment or replies thereto, in a regularly published newspaper, periodical, or on a radio or television broadcast where payment for the printed space or broadcast time is not normally required.” SEEC Elections Code Rules Rule 1.O.

Because CivicTide is controlled and paid for by a political committee (SeaFor), its content does not fall within these limited exceptions for independent or free media. To the extent CivicTide is publishing position statements, endorsements, or other content in coordination with Seattle City Council candidates, this content is reportable as a campaign contribution and is subject to contribution limits. Any uncoordinated endorsements, opinion pieces, or other content published “for the purpose of appealing, directly or indirectly” for support or opposition in a Seattle City Council campaign, may be reportable as an independent expenditure. And, in either case, content meeting the definition of “political advertising” must contain a sponsor identification that publicly discloses SeaFor’s top five contributors. *See* SMC 2.04.290.B.

V. SeaFor may additionally be the unregistered sponsor of an indirect/grassroots lobbying campaign.

Seattle law requires the sponsor of a “grassroots” or “indirect” lobbying campaign to register and report to the SEEC within 30 days. SMC 2.06.115. This requirement applies to “[a]ny person who has made expenditures, not otherwise reported by a registered lobbyist under this Chapter 2.06, or a candidate or political committee under Section 2.04.230 or 2.04.260, exceeding \$1,500 in the aggregate within any three-month period or exceeding \$750 in the aggregate within any one-month period in presenting a program to the public, a substantial portion of which is intended, designed, or calculated primarily to influence legislation.” SMC 2.06.115.A. Legislation includes “any council bill, ordinance, resolution, ballot measure or charter amendment,” as well as “making, confirming, or rejecting appointments to City positions.” SMC 2.06.010.

Via its Firehose tool and CivicTide website, SeaFor has encouraged members of the public to weigh in with the City Council on the City budget and other legislation—and actively facilitated these communications via pre-drafted emails. For example, an opinion piece on public health funding in the

2027 City budget makes the case for ongoing public health funding for recovery services and housing, followed by a script for a specific request to councilmembers. This script is followed by an “Email Council 30 SEC” button that auto-generates a pre-drafted email to council@seattle.gov, incorporating the title of the opinion piece as its subject line and linking back to the piece itself. Other policy briefs on the site also take positions on pending legislation followed by “Email Council 30 SEC” buttons that auto-generate emails using the same template.

While it is unknown how much money SeaFor has spent to stand up the CivicTide website and Firehose tool, CEO Sara Nelson told GeekWire that the organization had budgeted \$55,000–\$65,000 for web development and ongoing AI tokens—well in excess of the \$1,500 within a three month period to trigger reporting of a grassroots lobbying campaign.

Conclusion

For the reasons set forth in this letter, SeaFor is—quite brazenly—operating as an unregistered political committee. In light of the upcoming pre-election reporting deadlines for the 2026 Special Election for Seattle City Council District 5, P3 PAC asks that the SEEC quickly investigate this complaint and require SeaFor to disclose contributions received and expenditures made to date. Given SeaFor’s status as a political committee, P3 also requests that the SEEC review the content of its affiliated CivicTide website to ensure compliance with reporting requirements, contribution limits, and Seattle regulation of political advertising and grassroots lobbying.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns at (206) 644-6002.

Sincerely,



Abby Lawlor

Dmitri Iglitzin

Counsel for Progressive People Power PAC

cc : Stephen Paolini (via e-mail)_

In compliance with SMC 2.04.070, I, Abigail (Abby) Lawlor, affirm that I am a registered voter of the City of Seattle. I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of Washington that the information in this complaint is true and correct.



Abby Lawlor

EXHIBIT A



Business Information

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business Name: SEAFOR

Business Type: WA NONPROFIT CORPORATION

Principal Office Street Address: 5415 1ST AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA, 98105-3711, UNITED STATES

Expiration Date: 03/31/2027

Formation/ Registration Date: 03/30/2026

Inactive Date:

Charitable Corporation: ☒

Most Recent Gross Revenue is less than \$500,000: ☒

Public Benefit Designation: ☐

UBI Number: 606 151 561

Business Status: ACTIVE

Principal Office Mailing Address: 5415 1ST AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA, 98105-3711, UNITED STATES

Jurisdiction: UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON

Period of Duration: PERPETUAL

Nature of Business: ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE, SOCIAL WELFARE

Nonprofit EIN:

Has Members: ☐

Host Home: ☐

REGISTERED AGENT INFORMATION

Registered Agent Name: REGISTERED AGENTS INC.

Street Address: 100 N HOWARD ST STE R, SPOKANE, WA, 99201, UNITED STATES

Mailing Address: 100 N HOWARD ST STE R, SPOKANE, WA, 99201, UNITED STATES

GOVERNORS

Title	Governors Type	Entity Name	First Name	Last Name
GOVERNOR	INDIVIDUAL		SARA	NELSON
GOVERNOR	INDIVIDUAL		TANYA	WOO
GOVERNOR	INDIVIDUAL		ERIK	NIELSEN
GOVERNOR	INDIVIDUAL		DAN	MCGRADY

Success!

CLOUDFLARE
Privacy • Terms

EXHIBIT B



DISPATCH N° 001 • SEATTLE

We got this, *Seattle.*

It's all about setting ourselves up for success. SeaFor is a 501(c)(4) building the durable civic infrastructure for pragmatic, accountable governance: public education, policy oversight, and serious candidate support. Upping our game for the long-term.

The **2025 election** was a *wake-up call*. SeaFor is the solution.

WAGING THE PRAGMATIC COUNTERINSURGENCY,
FUELED BY REAL-TIME INFORMATION AND GIVING A
SHIT.

[Back the project](#)
[See the plan ↘](#)

EMERGENCY DISPATCH • SEATTLE

ALARM N° 05

The city is *going backwards.*

A five-alarm policy emergency.

FIVE FIRES BURNING

- Public safety • retreat & deflect
- Homelessness • spending up, results down
- Business climate • worst in U.S.
- Downtown vacancy • 36.5%
- Opioid OD response calls • up 27% since 2020

WAKE UP
SEATTLE

RESPONSE • SEAFOR

Fighting fire with a permanent solution.

DISPATCH N° 001 • SEATTLE • 2026

§ 00 • WHY SEAFOR EXISTS

One side built a *machine*. The other side gave to *one-off* campaigns.

The activist left has built the permanent infrastructure that makes winning at the ballot box and at the dais routine: coordinated candidate pipelines, powerful media outlets, advocacy nonprofits, and labor-funded PACs.

Pragmatic, middle-of-the-road voices, the broad center of Seattle's electorate, have nothing in comparison. Civic groups and business associations work in silos. Candidates who support evidence-based policy run without sustained institutional backing. Once in office, air cover between cycles is lacking.

The other side doesn't just win elections. It consistently shapes what City Hall does. Until the pragmatic majority builds something equivalent, the cycle keeps repeating: a moderate gets elected on a wave, governs alone, and gets picked off in the next election. We lose because we lack infrastructure. And we've seen the results in real life.

SeaFor is our infrastructure play. A permanent civic organization that empowers Seattle's majority: recruits candidates, funds their campaigns, defends them between elections, and stays in the field after November. Changing Seattle's political culture for good.

- NOT

another campaign committee that disappears after the election.
- NOT

a rebrand of an existing org with a fresh logo and the same instincts.
- NOT

a vehicle for any one candidate, advocacy group, or business interest.
- IS

permanent civic infrastructure for the pragmatic majority. Built to outlast every cycle.

§ 01 • STATE OF THE CITY

This isn't a slump.
It's a *structural problem*.

We've seen the results of bad governance. Seattle is objectively near the bottom of major U.S. cities on the metrics that drive our economy and dead-last on per-capita homelessness. State and local policy choices caused this, and those choices keep compounding.



40 / 50 41 / 50 42 / 50

A decade ago, top 10 in the country. Now bottom 5. That's not bad luck. That's policy: gross-receipts B&O tax, new capital gains tax, expanded UI for striking workers, the highest combined sales tax of any large U.S. city.

new Seattle business licenses, April 2026 vs. April 2025

2,221 new licenses in the first 110 days of 2026. Down 12.4% from 2025 and down 40% from 2019. The pipeline is drying up.

SPENDING VS. OUTCOMES

How much did it cost to get these results?

Despite skyrocketing investments in affordable housing, homelessness and overdoses continue to climb.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT ▲ +566% SINCE 2016

\$52.5M → \$349.5M

annual Seattle affordable-housing spend, 2016 → 2026 proposed



Seattle Budget Office

HOMELESSNESS, KING COUNTY ▲ +81% SINCE 2014

9,294 → 16,868

Point-in-Time count, 2014 → 2024



King County Regional Homelessness Authority & predecessor agencies (PIT counts)

OPIOID OVERDOSES, EMS-TREATED ▲ +217% SINCE 2020

3,571

Seattle EMS opioid overdose responses, 2025



Peaked 2019-2023, dipped in 2024 with widespread Narcan distribution, rising again. King County Overdose Dashboard

WE SEE THE STATISTICS. WE CAN ALSO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. → [THE WORK](#)

Three workstreams. *One public platform.*

Narrative Change. Elect moderate candidates. Block bad policy, advance pragmatic solutions. Durable change requires all three and that's what the public website is for. Here's how it departs from what's being done now.

01

Counter-narrative and accountability journalism

Seattle's political press has a point of view, and it doesn't lean moderate. Bad policy gets a pass when nobody's keeping score. Someone has to follow the dollar and track the results to hold our electeds accountable. It isn't *The Stranger*.

STATUS QUO

The Stranger and allied blogs set the narrative, social media takes it viral. Pragmatic electeds take a hard vote and get a hit piece. No balance, just one-sided coverage that spreads.

SEAFOR

We publish the counter-narrative. Original commentary, curated coverage, and policy analysis, sourced, shareable, and built to push back.

THIS IS WHAT ACCOUNTABILITY LOOKS LIKE

- **Business climate.** How Seattle's taxes and regulations affect businesses staying, leaving, or never opening here.
- **Public safety.** Crime rates, staffing math, response times, alternate-response, what's working and what's not.
- **Permitting & housing.** Time-to-permit benchmarks vs. peer cities, inspection delays, what to fix first.
- **Contracting readouts.** Following the dollar from ordinance to service-provider contract to policy outcome.
- **Homelessness response.** Recovery First vs. Harm Reduction, addiction treatment, per-bed costs, service provider performance, changing real lives, not just vibes.

02

Candidate recruitment & electoral support

Identify, recruit, and develop pragmatic candidates. Sustained backing through affiliated PAC and IE structures with a clean firewall and adult legal review.

STATUS QUO

A candidate calls a consultant in March of an election year. The candidate is a small business owner with no fundraising list, no comms shop, and a website built in a weekend. By July they're on defense. By November they've lost.

SEAFOR

A multi-cycle bench-building program. We meet candidates before they need us. Training, vetting, narrative work, and credible institutional support that doesn't disappear when the cycle gets ugly.

- **Bench pipeline.** Vetted prospects across districts, refreshed each cycle.
- **Candidate bootcamp.** Comms, fundraising, voter file, opposition research, debate prep.
- **Affiliated PAC + IE** with proper firewalls, public reporting, and outside legal review.
- **Air cover that doesn't fold.** Funded through the cycle, not until the first bad poll.

03

A weekly legislation tracker and call to action

The fight happens in committee. We track legislation from committee to final Council vote so the public knows what's happening in real time, on public safety, homelessness, housing, taxes, and addiction, and can do something about it.

STATUS QUO

Coverage repeats press release talking points and focuses on Full Council passage, missing the votes in committee where the real action happens. The only people who know how to influence it are paid lobbyists and activists.

SEAFOR

Committee-first coverage with one-click action. Hot-topic legislation, down to the amendment: who's sponsoring it and what it does, then who voted for it. Take Mayor Wilson's bill to expand tiny home villages: amended by Council to require 24/7 security and sober living options. What goes in doesn't come out the same. We make it easy for the public to weigh in along the way.

- **Weekly committee digest.** What got introduced, amended in committee, and moved to final vote, in plain English.
- **Amendment receipts.** The text, the sponsor, the vote count, and what changed from the original.
- **Take action, in 30 seconds.** Email your Councilmember, post the receipts, pitch an op-ed. Pre-drafted, fully editable, sourced.

→ The Brief. A 5-minute weekly readout on what moved at City Hall and what's coming next week.

§ 03 • THE IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY

2026 is the launch. 2027 is full deployment.

The 2026 special election to fill the District 5 vacancy is the race where a pragmatic majority on Council can be held, or quietly given away. Winning it isn't the ceiling, it's the pilot. The communications, coalition, and accountability infrastructure built this cycle get deployed across all seven district seats in 2027.

For high-impact donors, this is the early window: fund SeaFor's start-up costs, the public website, and the campaign war chest directly tied to the 2027 super-majority win, and beyond.



2026		D5 special election · message discipline · legal discipline · product velocity
2027		All seven district seats · pragmatic majority · full deployment

§ 04 • FLAGSHIP PRODUCT PREVIEW

The Firehose. *To put out dumpster fires before they spread.*

Seattle's far-progressive electeds keep lighting fires: shutting down CCTV cameras, blocking addiction treatment, taxing job creators out of the city. The Firehose is for putting them out. A bill tracker and weekly alert on what happened in committee and why you need to care about it now, with one-click ways to do something before the final vote, not after the consequences sink in: **email your Councilmember, post the receipts, pitch an op-ed.**

A WEEKLY ALARM - BUILT SO YOU CAN ACT IN 30 SECONDS

A WEEKLY ALERT • BUT YOU CAN ACT IN 30 SECONDS,
NOT 30 MINUTES

firehose.seafor.org / this-week

LIVE

THE FIREHOSE • VOL. 01 • NO. 14 • SAMPLE

What Council did this week. What you can do about it.

Read time • 4 min • Act time • 30 sec

INTRODUCED

Progressive Revenue • CB 122XXX

Mayor's budget package would implement a municipal capital gains tax and dial up JumpStart. No reduction in spending proposed. Air cover for pragmatic votes.

Committee hearing • TBD

Placeholder example. Final dispatch ships with the Firehose launch.

Email your Councilmember

PRE-DRAFTED • 30 SEC

Post the receipts

X • BLUESKY • LINKEDIN

Pitch an op-ed

450 WORDS • SOURCED

IN COMMITTEE

SPD staffing & alternative response • CB 121ABC

Chair's package would fund 120 net new SPD hires and 10 more CARE responders for behavioral health calls. In committee this week. The fiscal note pencils. Likely vote count doesn't, yet.

Committee hearing • Tue 9:30am

Placeholder example. Final dispatch ships with the Firehose launch.

Email your Councilmember

PRE-DRAFTED • 30 SEC

Post the receipts

X • BLUESKY • INSTAGRAM

Pitch an op-ed

450 WORDS • SOURCED

PASSED

Permitting reform • CB 121XYZ

Seattle's broken permitting system adds risk and slows construction, driving up housing costs and inhibiting economic growth. Plus, it's a real hassle. Comprehensive reform is long overdue but staff resist changing their workflow, so it has to be legislated, one fix at a time.

Yes 9 No 0

Thank the Yes votes

9 COUNCILMEMBERS • 1 CLICK

Post the results

FACTS FOR SOCIAL

Push for the next one:

FACE-TO-FACE CUSTOMER SERVICE

SPIN VS. REALITY

“Historic investment in affordable housing”

The 2026 budget includes an additional \$349 million for affordable housing, an all-time high. That's on top of \$160 million already in the budget that has yet to be spent. Both are true; only one fits in a tweet.

Post the side-by-side

ALLOCATED • OUT THE DOOR

Pitch an op-ed

SEATTLE TIMES • THE MEDIUM

Sources: Council agendas • Mayor's press release • Fiscal notes

Preview • Not yet live

Bills, committees, amendments, final votes. You can't track everything so the Firehose does it for you. Policy, mobilization, accountability.

What passed • What stalled • What changed • Who voted for it • S

chrome-extension://ohlencieiipommannpdfcmfdpjmeolj/screenshot.html

6/11

§ 05 • MEDIA

Changing the narrative. And the *rapid response*.

There's a shortage of media outlets representing the moderate middle in Seattle. The Seattle Times is blocked by a paywall. Local broadcast news has its moments, but who watches TV? The Stranger runs far-left and the cheat-sheet gets the last word. Everything in between is hit-or-miss at best, or a podcast nobody listens to. Meanwhile, TikTok is taken for news. The pragmatic majority has been polite for so long we forgot how to be loud. We're done being nice.

SeaFor aggregates coverage of current hot topics, shining a spotlight on thorough reporting from a range of perspectives. And we publish original commentary that pokes fun at the opinion pretending to be fact. Witty, sarcastic, sourced, and designed to generate views. The moderate middle can be loud and opinionated. We will not roll over.

WHAT WE PUBLISH

Original commentary, aggregated receipts

Policy briefs, explainers, and the goings-on at City Hall from the moderate-pragmatic lane. Plus a curated round-up of the journalism and posts that actually moved the conversation, with a sentence on why each lands.

- Curated reading list · every dispatch
- Original columns · 1–2 a week
- Receipts threads, sourced and shareable

COMING SOON

WHAT WE PAN

The activist media, lovingly roasted

Press releases dressed as news. Hot takes with zero math. The same outlets getting the same three things wrong on purpose. We name names, link the receipts, and have fun doing it. Designed to be provocative – and shared.

- Shameless bias exposed · ongoing
- Bad-take of the week, with the actual facts
- Sources cited so you can post and forward

COMING SOON

“The pragmatic majority has been polite for so long it forgot how to be loud. We're done with that.”

EDITORIAL MANDATE

§ 06 • POLITICS

Races, candidates, the electoral fight.

COMING SOON

Races, candidates, endorsements.

Electoral rights

Policy is the day job; durable political change is the point. Voters citywide, including the moderate base, need more access to information to stay on top of local elections and what's at stake. SeaFor makes it easy, keeping voters updated on candidates and campaigns like no other outlet: races to watch, detailed candidate positions, endorsements, and blunt analysis on the state of the race.

This is where the election work will live. Tracking is the day job; politics is the point. The 2026 District 5 test run ties directly to the 2027 pragmatic majority play.

2026	District 5 • pilot run
2027	All seven district seats
2029	All city-wide seats
METHOD	Affiliated PAC + IE, firewalled

§ 07 • WHY SUPPORT THIS NOW

The fight for good governance starts *now*.

- i.

Timing

Strike while the iron's hot. 2026 D5 is the pilot. 2027 is full deployment with all seven district seats on the ballot. Policy at play now will shape Seattle's future for years. **All donations support SeaFor's mission of holding City Hall accountable for results.**
- ii.

Leverage

Washington's 501(c)(4) structure protects the privacy of businesses and individuals historically punished for backing fiscally responsible causes. Donor education from day one.

SUPPORT THE WORK

Donate

Choose Amount

One-time

Monthly

Annually

\$500

\$1,000

\$5,000

\$10,000

\$25,000

Other

Apple Pay Google Pay PayPal
Available on hosted form

Email *

Email is required

☐ Send me updates by email (not needed for receipts)

Phone

☐ Send me updates by text*

* By providing your phone number, you are consenting to receive text message updates, including automated text messages, to that number from SeaFor. Message & Data rates may apply, and message frequency may vary over time. Reply "STOP" to opt out of these text message updates.

First name *

First name is required

Last name *

Last name is required

Address *

Address is required

This form only accepts US addresses.

Are you currently employed?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Employer Name *

Employer name is required

Occupation *

Occupation is required

Employer Address *

Address is required

This form only accepts US addresses.

CONTACT SEAFOR

Questions, intros, or a note to a founder? Write to us. Goes straight to the inbox, no list, no CRM.

Your email

you@example.com

Message

A sentence is fine. A paragraph is better. We read everything.

Send to info@seafor.live

info@seafor.live

The blunt FAQ.

How does SeaFor interact with other pragmatic efforts?



SeaFor's mission is to strengthen the ecosystem of like-minded efforts, through partnerships, financial support, and so on, not compete with them. The movement left has built a vertically integrated political machine, with Legislative District leadership, labor, city-subsidized nonprofits, and disproportionately influential media outlets working in loose concert to advance common priorities. We've got to get our act together as well. The more pragmatic-oriented entities can coordinate efforts, the better.

How is SeaFor different from other pragmatic efforts?



Speed and coordination. Agentic AI watches every Council packet, amendment, and viral pile-on the moment it posts. Within hours, not weeks, we package the receipts (fiscal notes, SEEC filings, prior votes, comparable cities) and hand briefs to center-pragmatic writers, podcasters, and thought leaders. The agents bring the speed. Humans bring the wit, the sources, and the spine.

Is my contribution disclosed publicly?



Contributions to a Washington 501(c)(4) are not publicly disclosed at the donor level. PAC and independent expenditure activity, when it occurs, follows separate disclosure rules under WA PDC and SEEC. We'll walk you through which lane fits your goals before any commitment.

Is this a campaign committee?



No. SeaFor is the 501(c)(4) civic infrastructure entity. Electoral activity runs through a separate PAC / IE structure with a clean firewall. The c4 builds the operating system. The PAC, when it operates, plays in its own clearly-marked lane.

What is the first 90-day budget?



Counsel and other start-up costs, the public website, and the 2026 District 5 race. We can share the line-item budget with interested donors upon request.

How small can a meaningful contribution be?



One-time donations of any amount are welcome but if you can commit to an annual gift, that allows us to focus on the public-facing product over fundraising activities. If money's a problem, there are real ways to support that aren't financial: warm intros, civic partnership, content collaboration and so on. Tell us what you've got. We're more interested in your super powers than the largest checks.

Can I support privately?



Yes. Contributions to 501(c)(4) nonprofits are anonymous but not tax deductible. Many of our supporters operate businesses, sit on boards, or hold positions where public political activity isn't tenable.

What if I disagree with you on a specific issue?



Good. We back outcomes-focused governance on the issues that impact real lives: public safety, homelessness, addiction recovery, housing, economic development, etc. Disagreements on individual issues are welcome and enrich the conversation. What matters is how City Hall addresses them. If you agree all perspectives should be respected and that policymakers should hold themselves accountable

[sf] SEAFOR · SEATTLE FORWARD A Washington 501(c)(4) social welfare organization, forming. © 2026 · SeaFor · Seattle, WA
Independent of any campaign committee. Activities subject to
counsel review.

EXHIBIT C



Q I'm looking for...



Home



My Network



Jobs



Messaging



Notification



Erik Nielsen

Former Policy Director for the President of the Seattle City Council

← Experience



Policy Director

City of Seattle · Full-time

Apr 2025 - Dec 2025 · 9 mos

Seattle, Washington, United States



Freight Advisory Board Member

Seattle Department of Transportation · Part-time

Oct 2023 - Apr 2025 · 1 yr 7 mos

Seattle, Washington, United States · On-site

Collaborated with experts on freight, supply chains, and transportation to advise the City of Seattle on transportation projects

Advocated for millions of dollars of levy funding to be allocated to freight improvements

EXHIBIT D



DAN MCGRADY 2026

[Overview](#) [Reports](#) [Clients](#)

Contact Information

PO BOX 778
SEATTLE, WA 98111

2066287989 (Main)

DAN.MCGRADY@PEMCO.COM

Financial Overview for 2026

\$55,000.00	Compensation
—	\$0.00 Subcontractor Compensation
\$55,000.00	Net Compensation

\$0.00	Personal Expenses
\$332.13	Entertainment
\$89,900.00	Contributions
\$0.00	PAC Contributions
\$0.00	Advertising
\$0.00	Political Ads
\$0.00	Independent Expenditures (Candidate)
\$0.00	Independent Expenditures (Ballot)
+	\$0.00 Other
\$145,232.13	Total Expenses

Reporting Compliance Status for 2026

Jan ✓	Feb ✓	Mar ✓
Apr ✓	May ✓	Jun ✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep ✓
Oct ○	Nov ○	Dec ○

Legend for monthly report status

- ✓ Filed
- Not due yet
- ⚠ Due, but not filed
- No lobbying during this filing period
- *** Exempt from filing during this filing period

Lobbyists (1)



DAN MCGRADY

Lobbying since 2002

Dan McGrady possesses over 20 years of government and political experience. He served as Government Affairs Sr. Manager at Vulcan Inc. for 12 years. Prior to that, McGrady was a Legislative Aide to Seattle City Councilmember Drago for seven years and a session aide to Senator Margarita Prentice.

This lobbyist certified completion of required code of conduct training on 12/04/2024.

EXHIBIT E

**Building the Pragmatic Machine**

Strike while the iron is hot. Fund the war chest for this year's District 5 race and grow it for 2027 when all seven district seats are on the ballot. Block the bad policy today before the negative consequences are felt tomorrow. Donor identities are not publicly disclosed. The fight for good governance starts now.

Choose Amount

One-time Monthly Annually

\$500

\$1,000

\$5,000

\$10,000

\$25,000

Other

Express Checkout



OR

Email *

☐ Send me updates by email (not needed for receipts)

Phone

☐ Send me updates by text*

* By providing your phone number, you are consenting to receive text message updates, including automated text messages, to that number from SeaFor. Message & Data rates may apply, and message frequency may vary over time. Reply "STOP" to opt out of these text message updates.

First name * Last name *

Address *

This form only accepts US addresses.

Are you currently employed?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Employer Name * Occupation *

Employer Address *

This form only accepts US addresses.

Card Bank PayPal

Card number

Expiration date Security code

Country United States ZIP

Donate

Your information is secure.

By accessing this form you agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

SeaFor is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization building the permanent infrastructure Seattle's pragmatic majority has never had. Contributions are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

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[Anedot](#)

EXHIBIT F

About · CivicTide

 civictide.org/about



About CivicTide

Seattle deserves a City Hall that works. But most of what happens there is hard to follow, easy to miss, and too often determined by whoever can show up. CivicTide exists to change that.

This is all about putting out legislative dumpster fires and mobilizing air cover for Councilmembers taking hard votes. We back outcomes-focused governance on the issues that impact people's daily lives: public safety; homelessness; housing; addiction; and the City's fiscal decisions, to name just a few.

Some voices get plenty of airtime at City Hall while others barely make it into the room. CivicTide broadens that conversation. Our weekly rundown tracks legislation from introduction through committee to final vote, what people are saying about it, and when votes are scheduled so you can watch or weigh in. CivicTide's policy briefs dig into the details of significant bills and explain how their implementation could impact regular Seattleites and small businesses, with links to supporting documents to check for yourself and positions you're free to disagree with.

Government is a two-way street. Councilmembers make better decisions when constituents weigh in. So when you want to be heard, we make it easy to email your Councilmember or share your perspective on social media, both in about thirty seconds.

CivicTide's view tends to be simple: if it's not working, do something different. In our opinion column we connect the dots between what's going on, the forces keeping Seattle stuck, and pragmatic solutions to move our city forward.

We've got this, Seattle.

CivicTide is published by SeaFor, a Washington 501(c)(4) social welfare organization. [Read the latest briefs](#) and [subscribe to our email updates](#).

Privacy · CivicTide

 civictide.org/legal/privacy



Privacy

Privacy Policy

CivicTide does not sell your data. We use cookieless page-view analytics. If you subscribe to the weekly dispatch, Mailchimp sends it and tracks opens and clicks. Unsubscribe anytime via the link in every email. Questions: privacy@civictide.org.

This policy was last updated in September 2026. CivicTide is published by SeaFor, a Washington 501(c)(4) social welfare organization.

On this website

No reader accounts. Cookieless analytics.

You can read without signing up. There are no reader accounts, comments, or profiles. We use Vercel Web Analytics for aggregate page-view statistics. We run no advertising pixels, social tracking tags, tag manager, or session replay.

Vercel processes page views, browser and device information, approximate location, and, when safe to include, the referring site. It uses a request-derived visitor hash with a session lifetime of up to 24 hours, not analytics cookies. We do not send your email, account identity, form contents, URL query strings, or fragments to analytics. Ordinary server logs are separate. Your calendar layout preference stays in your browser.

Dynamic page addresses are replaced with generic route names. Subscription and confirmation pages are excluded, and visits with detailed incoming referrers are omitted rather than risk sending sensitive information. We do not join analytics to subscriber records or use it for advertising. See [Vercel's analytics privacy documentation](#).

The private newsroom uses the same limited page-view analytics, without staff identities, draft titles, document IDs, sign-in pages, or preview pages.

Outbound links to news coverage open in a new tab and are not wrapped or tracked. We are not paid for clicks.

The emailed dispatch

We record opens and clicks.

Mailchimp, CivicTide's bulk email provider, stores your email address and records whether you opened the dispatch and which links you clicked. We use summary engagement numbers to see which briefs readers read and whether the list is healthy. We do not copy per-reader open and click records into our own database.

We use service providers to store subscription data and deliver the dispatch. We do not sell or rent the list, or share it with advertisers, nonprofit organizations, political action committees, candidates, data brokers, or independent expenditure efforts for their own use. We do not build reader profiles.

Clicking a link in the email may route you through the provider before landing here. The page you land on is a normal page on this site and carries no tracking parameters we read or store.

What we hold

Your email and subscription status.

Your email address is the only personal information we ask for. We store it encrypted at rest in our database, along with the status and timing needed to manage your subscription. Mailchimp also stores your address to deliver the dispatch.

When signup is available, we send your address to Mailchimp to request a confirmation email. You join the list only after using the confirmation link in that email on Mailchimp's hosted page. This is double opt-in. Visiting a page on this website does not confirm a subscription.

Unconfirmed signup records are deleted within 30 days of the signup request, from our database and from Mailchimp.

Every dispatch carries an unsubscribe link. Opening a link on this website does not change your subscription; the unsubscribe button submits the request. When you unsubscribe, your address is hard deleted from our database within 30 days, and we instruct the mail service provider to delete its copy and your engagement history on the same schedule. Hard deleted, not flagged as inactive.

You can ask us what we hold about you, or ask us to delete it, at any time. Write to privacy@civictide.org.

Funding

CivicTide is funded by SeaFor, a Washington 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofit organization.

Contact

EXHIBIT G



Former Seattle City Council president launches AI-powered site to track and report on City Hall

BY **TODD BISHOP** on Sep 21, 2026 at 10:11 am



Sara Nelson launched the CivicTide website Monday. (Sara Nelson Campaign Photo)

Sara Nelson, the former Seattle City Council president, is making her debut as a publisher and commentator, with an eye toward boosting civic engagement, and a little help from AI agents.

CivicTide, which Nelson launched Monday at civictide.org, tracks and reports on Seattle City Council legislation from introduction to final vote. Policy briefs — such as [this one](#) on Councilmember Dan Strauss' plan to create RV parking permits for people living in vehicles — summarize what a bill would do, explain



Readers can use built-in tools on the site to quickly email councilmembers on specific issues or post their views on social media. CivicTide arrives one day before the council starts its budget deliberations, which Nelson said was deliberate timing.

"I'm trying to solve for the hassle of civic engagement," Nelson said in an interview with GeekWire, describing it as an effort to help create "more accountable, accessible governance."

Each policy brief links to the underlying ordinance and committee records. The site also aggregates and links to coverage elsewhere, and publishes opinion pieces on specific issues, such as [this one](#) calling Mayor Katie Wilson's freeze on police hiring bonuses "downright reckless."

Does that make CivicTide partisan? "Every piece of media, even the reporting pages, everything has a slant," Nelson said. At the same time, she said she will aim for neutrality in describing what a bill would do, while confining her own read to the "spin vs. reality" section.

Asked whether she would be open to Mayor Wilson writing a guest column for CivicTide, Nelson didn't hesitate. "I would welcome that," she said.

How it works: Behind the scenes of the website, a custom AI-powered content management system ingests city legislative data hourly and gives Nelson a ranked queue of what's worth writing about. It offers draft posts ready for her to review, edit, and rework as needed before publication.

It was built by [Viet Nguyen](#), a veteran Seattle tech communications executive who has developed a specialty in building political and civic websites. He used AI to write the whole thing from scratch, including the public site, the backend, and the editorial workflow he calls the newsroom.



CivicTide

Turning the tide toward accountable governance at Seattle City Hall

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Top news *this week*

IN COMMITTEE

CB 121283 2026-09-20

CM Strauss's RV permit plan ("VRAP") legalizes vehicle living for people included in a one-time permit census while tightening rules on everyone else. (Part I)

OPINION

With budget around the corner, Mayor releases Gun Violence Plan, ends SPD hiring bonuses and addiction treatment.

Mayor Wilson released her Gun Violence Plan after "freezing" SPD hiring bonuses and redirecting addiction recovery funds to her shelter expansion.

BY: CIVICTIDE TEAM · CIVICTIDE OPINION

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ALL COMMENTARY

THIS WEEK'S WATCH [FULL WEEK —](#)

The new CivicTide site, which tracks Seattle City Council legislation and offers reporting and commentary.

Nelson acknowledged that using AI this way could raise questions among the press and general public, and said she expects to be asked about it. "My motto is, don't get left behind," she said. "We have to use every tool within our toolbox to actually make government more accessible."

She approves everything the system produces: "There is always a human behind the machinery."

Changing media landscape: The site also aggregates and links to stories from established local outlets, chosen for their connection to active legislation, from a set flagged by the AI in the backend for Nelson's editorial consideration.

As in many media markets, Seattle has a smaller set of reporters covering City Hall than it used to. Nelson



out the conversation and sources of news.

For example, in addition to the Seattle Times, the site's "In the press" section currently links to KUOW, KING 5, KOMO News, The Seattle Medium, and a post from the personal blog of Tim Burgess, the former City Council president who served as deputy mayor under Bruce Harrell.

Articles from The Stranger, Publicola, GeekWire and many other sites are among the sources served up for Nelson's consideration in the CivicTide backend.

Meanwhile, AI has made these kinds of sites cheaper and easier to build.

GeekWire [profiled a similar project](#) in April: [Next30Days](#), built by former Amazon product manager Julien Clayton, which pulls agendas from the same Legistar system and summarizes them to get people to attend meetings. It takes no position on the bills it covers.

Background and perspective: Nelson, who co-founded Fremont Brewing, spent four years on the council, two as its president, and was its most consistently business-friendly member, advocating for police hiring, addiction treatment and permitting changes.

She lost her seat in November to Dionne Foster and left office in January. Asked whether she plans to run for council again, and whether CivicTide is part of that, Nelson said no.

Support from business leaders: CivicTide is debuting at a time when business leaders and elected officials from outside Seattle are becoming more vocal about the city's economic direction.

The site's launch announcement includes testimonials from business and neighborhood leaders, including chef Ethan Stowell, SODO Business Improvement Area executive director Erin Goodman, Joyale Seafood owner Vincent Zhao, Gary Lee of the Chinatown-International District Public Safety Council, and Tina Bueche, a former president of the Pioneer Square Community Council.

In the announcement, Stowell said the restaurant industry "feels totally unrepresented in City Hall," and that small businesses lack the time and staff to keep up with the city's shifting proposals even though they absorb the consequences. He said CivicTide would let them track the legislation that affects them and weigh in "before it's a done deal."

Nonprofit status: The publisher of CivicTide is SeaFor, a 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofit that Nelson runs, registered in Washington state. Donors to a 501(c)(4) aren't required to be disclosed publicly in the state, and Nelson declined to name hers in the interview with GeekWire last week.

The organization does plan to contribute to an independent expenditure campaign in the District 5 race, the only council seat on the ballot this year, Nelson said. If SeaFor is among that campaign's largest donors, its own top three contributors will be named on the mailers.

Nelson said she's supporting Julie Kang in that race, though a formal endorsement would follow interviews with Kang and Nilu Jenks, scored against a rubric.

GeekWire [profiled Nguyen in August](#). His recent projects include [Culliton2026.org](#), an AI-generated guide to how state Supreme Court candidates might rule on Washington's new millionaires' tax. That site took a few hours and about \$100 in AI tokens

RELATED



Twin tech founders who left Seattle for Alaska bet on an AI agent named 'Walter' to cover local news



CivicTide is a bigger undertaking. Nelson said her organization's budget is \$163,000 for July through December, with \$55,000 to \$65,000 of that going to site development and ongoing AI tokens. The rest covers legal costs and the planned independent expenditure, she said. She isn't paying herself.

SeaFor's other stated purpose is recruiting and supporting candidates whom Nelson calls pragmatic — a term she defined loosely, covering everyone from a small-business owner to "a neighbor on Aurora who's sick of seeing the mayhem every Saturday night."



GeekWire editor and co-founder Todd Bishop is a business and technology journalist who covers beats including Amazon, Microsoft, AI, and startups, and hosts *GeekWire's weekly podcast*. X: [@toddbishop](#). Email: todd@geekwire.com. Phone: (530) 230-3439; Signal: 1-206-300-0265.

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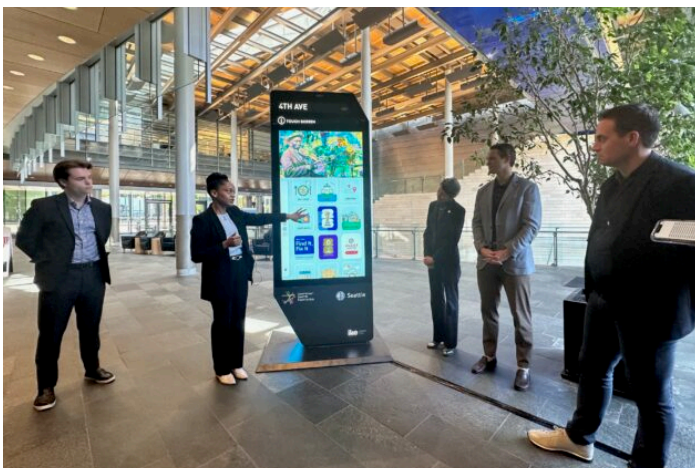
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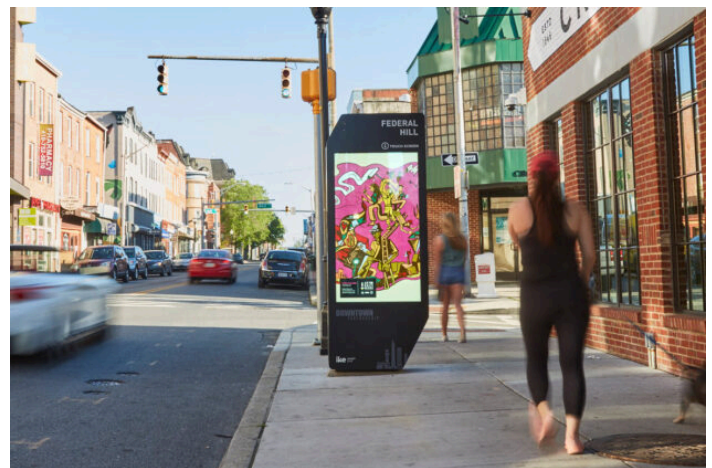
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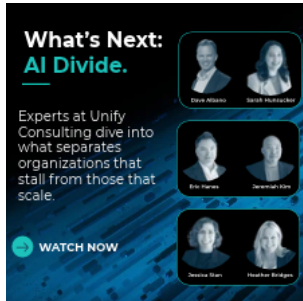
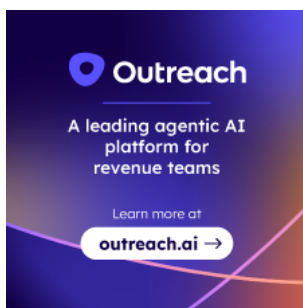
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EXHIBIT H



Seattle City Hall, explained plainly: tracking legislation so you can make a difference.

Mayor hoarded 2026 treatment funding to pay for shelter expansion in 2027

Addiction treatment disappears in the Mayor's shell game to balance the budget and create more shelter.

By **CivicTide Team** · Updated 6 days ago

For the past several years, the Mayor has faced a massive projected budget deficit in the following year, each time managing to close the gap and send Council a balanced budget to deliberate in fall budget season.

In 2022, the projected General Fund deficit for 2023 was \$117 million. In 2023 it was \$209-\$250M for 2024; in 2024 it was \$200M for 2025; and in 2025, it was \$150M-\$170M for 2026. This year, the projected 2027 deficit was \$175M – and, ta da! Mayor Wilson's proposed budget closes it.

How did she do that? Well, it certainly wasn't through massive layoffs – that was a political non-starter, especially after PROTECT endorsed her over Harrel. In fact, the number of citywide positions in her proposed budget grows from 13,063 in the adopted 2026 budget to 14,011 in 2027, up 48 ([City of Seattle 2027 - 2028 Budget](#), p 639).

No, the Mayor balanced her proposed budget primarily by tapping the JumpStart Fund, 62% of which is supposed to go to affordable housing, the rest – For homelessness spending, the budget summary says it "shifts roughly half the cost of the City's homelessness response from the General Fund to the JumpStart Fund" ([Summary](#), p. 16).

Sidenote: Using JumpStart to pay for General Fund expenditures is nothing new. What is new this year is that affordable housing providers and advocates aren't crying bloody murder about it, presumably because it's their political ally doing the "raiding." But we digress.

And then there are the underspends. Wilson's balancing act wouldn't be possible without all the money Council appropriated last year sitting around unspent. The \$37 million shelter expansion alone needs \$16M in "existing or reallocated department funds" to pull off, per the [Mayor's Office as reported by KOMO](#).

The budget itemizes only part of that \$16M:

- \$4.9M repurposed from closing shelter sites ([HSD](#), p. 163)
- \$2.1M moved from public health ([p. 168](#))
- \$1.7M of federal block grant money (CDBG) ([p. 109](#))

Here's what we're mad about. That \$2.1M is 74% of the \$2.85M Council locked down by proviso last year for recovery-based services and sober housing as specified in [Council Budget Action HSD-060-A](#) (see p. 80).

The Wilson administration even told the Finance Committee back in March she was planning on stealing that money, calling it "not uncommitted" – and what a surprise, it stayed that way!

And the only reason she couldn't take all the \$2.85M is because service providers had been using the \$500,000 allocated for on-demand inpatient treatment, a preexisting program to get people immediately into a treatment facility that later bills the city directly. And it was [saving lives!](#)

Now, \$2.1M may not seem like much to get worked up about. But considering her budget would allocate \$118 million for the same old homelessness services that haven't produced stellar results (on top of a whopping \$347.7M for affordable housing), you'd think this tiny amount would be left inactivate given that addiction is a root cause of so many problems we spend gazillions of dollars to solve. Guess not.

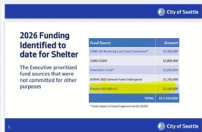
Only CM Rivera inquired about what's going on with the money Council unanimously restricted for treatment that hasn't been spent and HSD admitted it got moved in the budget for shelter ([Seattle Channel video](#), 1:15-2:2).

As we rant in our [homelessness policy brief](#):

"Addiction is a major driver of chronic homelessness. Until the city puts recovery at the center of its agenda, it'll continue spending more and more money each year on homelessness; the problem will keep getting worse; and people will keep dying on our streets and in city-funded housing and shelter. Providing more on-demand, recovery services means less need for shelter and permanent supportive housing. That not only makes good fiscal sense, it's the morally right thing to do. Council could address this major gap in the city's homelessness response in budget amendments."

Yes, that's a subtle hint. If we were to focus a real Call To Action, we'd say: **"Contact your Councilmember and request that they restore \$2.1M to the Promoting Public Health Budget Summary Level in HSD for the recovery services and housing listed in HSD-060-A."**

But that's not really CivicTide's style. It's up to you.



Slide 3 of presentation on CR 1785 of Mar 30, 2026 Finance, Native Communities & Tribal Governance Committee

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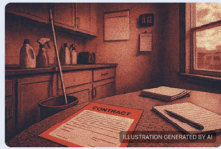
EXHIBIT I



Seattle City Hall, explained plainly: tracking legislation so you can make a difference.

CB 121266 PASSED · 2026-07-01

As if things weren't hard enough for Seattle residents and families, Council considers expanded regulations and penalties for households that employ domestic workers



The amendments reflect the Office of Labor Standards' (OLS's) intention to strengthen worker protections. CB 121266 would require "hiring entities" (i.e. families) to provide detailed contracts before work starts, three years of records, advance notice before termination, and steeper penalties, shifting the burden of proof onto them in a dispute.

By The CivicTide Team · Updated 1 month ago

4 hours per month

State-law coverage threshold for domestic workers
SOURCE: SUMMARY AND FISCAL NOTE

\$1,000

State civil penalty paid to WA Labor and Industries
SOURCE: SUMMARY AND FISCAL NOTE

\$9,000

OLS implementation cost for these amendments
SOURCE: CENTRAL STAFF MEMO

CB 121266 would amend the Domestic Worker's Ordinance, require written agreements, leave protections, three-year records retention, and two or four-week termination notice for nannies, cleaners and caregivers

The changes follow Domestic Workers Standards Board recommendations and a 2025 OLS report, and partly conform Seattle to a new state law (SHB 2355) effective the same day, July 1, 2027. But in four places the city goes further: the written agreement carries more terms, recordkeeping is broader, termination exceptions are fewer, and the penalty schedule is equivalent to business violations of labor laws. Two provisions shift the burden onto the household miss the recordkeeping and a household is presumed to have violated the law; skip the written agreement and the worker's version of the terms is presumed true. Both can be rebutted only by "clear and convincing evidence."

STAKES

The people the equity framing is built to protect are the workers; the people the compliance burden falls hardest on are the least-resourced employers such as the single parent who hired a neighbor to watch her kid because daycare was out of reach. The notice rule (two weeks, four for live-in) has exceptions: misconduct, death, changed care needs, the worker unable to perform, and "circumstances outside the hiring entity's control." Whether losing one's job counts is anyone's guess: it's undefined and puntied to Director's rules. So a parent whose own hours get cut and who has to end the arrangement immediately may owe pay-in-lieu they by definition can't cover and won't know in advance whether they're covered.

In four areas the city exceeds state law: agreement terms, recordkeeping, fewer termination exceptions, and a Seattle-specific penalty schedule. Enforcement is thin: OLS runs domestic-worker outreach on a single position and acts on complaints, so the presumptions and penalties (up to \$26,637.97 per worker for repeat violations, plus attorney's fees and a City-contract bar) carry the weight. The bill was discussed in the Human Services, Labor, and Economic Development Committee on August 7 and the Committee takes it up again Aug. 21.

Receipts

SPONSOR	Alexis Mercedes Rinck
COMMITTEE	Human Services, Labor and Economic Development
FISCAL NOTE	\$0 → \$9,000 one-time (2027), absorbed within existing OLS budget; 0 new FTEs; outreach costs unfunded (Central Staff memo) (Summary and Fiscal Note attached; numbers not extracted)

◆ SPIN

Basic fairness: the contracts, leave, and job security other workers already have.

◆ REALITY

An expansion of labor-standards rules onto ordinary households that exceeds state law and leans on burden-shifting presumptions

WHERE IT STANDS

STATUS: Passed · LAST ACTION: [Submitted for Mayor's signature · Sep 17, 2026](#) · NEXT: [No further votes scheduled](#)

Primary documents

BILL TEXT	Full bill text on Legistar	
SUMMARY AND FISCAL NOTE	Summary and Fiscal Note	DOCX
CENTRAL STAFF MEMO	Central Staff Memo	PDF
PRESENTATION	Presentation	PDF

Filed with the City Clerk. Opens on Legistar, the Council's own records system.

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