

WHEREAS, Seattle is in the throes of a stunning and unprecedented affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Skyhigh rents are driving working-class households, seniors, students, and especially working families of color out of our city, and sometimes into homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the loss of affordable housing in Seattle is a crisis deeply impacting the lives of our students, our coworkers, and their families, in addition to academic student employees (ASEs); and

WHEREAS, 82% of ASEs report being rent burdened, and ASEs spend on average over 40% of their income on rent; and

WHEREAS, the average rent in Seattle has risen 69% since 2010, far beyond the rate of inflation, so that now 46% of Seattle renters are officially rent burdened; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that rising rent increases homelessness. On average, in urban areas, each \$100 increase in the average rent causes a 15% increase in homelessness; and

WHEREAS, when coupled with social housing (publicly-owned affordable housing), cities with rent control policies that include all homes rather than a small subset of homes, such as Montreal, have been able to keep rents affordable; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing movement for rent control and social housing. Cities up and down the west coast, from Vancouver, BC to California, have raised taxes on wealthy corporations to build affordable housing, and Oregon passed a version of rent control earlier this year. Renters in Colorado are currently organizing to urge their state legislature to repeal a ban there; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has banned any form of rent control since 1981 when, under real estate lobby influence, a law was passed in Olympia stating “No city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged.”; and

WHEREAS, On April 15, renter rights advocates from the Tenants Union of Washington State, the City of Seattle Renters Commission, union members, renters organizing their buildings, immigrant rights activists, socialists, and Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant announced plans to advocate for a citywide rent control ordinance in Seattle this year, that would become effective the moment the State Legislature lifts the rent control ban.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, UAW Local 4121 finds that addressing the rapid loss of affordable housing in Seattle is of paramount importance to our ability to conduct research, and to provide an education for University of Washington students, and we fully support efforts to expand the development of affordable social housing, and rent control policies that limit rent increases.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, UAW Local 4121 urges the Seattle City Council and the Mayor to provide urgent protection to all renters against exorbitant rent increases, by adopting a comprehensive citywide rent control policy, free of corporate loopholes, effective the moment Washington State repeals its rent control ban.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, UAW Local 4121 urges the Washington State Legislature to lift the statewide ban on rent control, RCW 32.21.830.