

May 29, 2018

Hello,

I am writing to all the people who sent comments into the Office of Labor Standards back in August and September of 2017 regarding the elimination of the special certificates within Seattle.

Some of this information may be a surprise to many of you since the information that has been reported and shared through the media has not been fully accurate and inclusive. It had been an unfortunate situation in that many of us who have advocated for continued choice and alternatives for our community members with disabilities (tending to be people with intellectual/developmental disabilities who have significant support needs in general for the population affected by this law) have been silenced and excluded from any conversations related to passing this ordinance pushed by the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities and the Office of Labor Standards.

I, myself, have been blocked from interactions on Facebook with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities and have had libelous comments written about me by the Commission Co-Chair, Shaun Bickley. There have been issues of censorship for many months. The Commission has been unwilling to review questions and concerns of community members or to clarify issues of research they have claimed to have done.

While I fully support minimum wage and supported employment, I am also aware that eliminating the special certificates reduces choice and alternatives for many. Given that I and others were not able to have conversations and receive clarification of concerns we have no idea if any of our concerns were even addressed in the decision-making process. I am particularly concerned with the total lack of planning with this rapid elimination.

Due to the abusive responses I have received from the co-chair without any reference to the questions and concerns community members have raised about this particular issue, my attention has focused on transparency and accountability of this Commission and their responsibility to our community. I have made several public disclosure requests and have received most of the information that I requested - with the exception of meeting minutes. I had requested meeting minutes from the Commission's meetings from July 2017 through the current date. The response that I received from the city was that there had not been a quorum at the meetings so there were no minutes - **for 10 months!**

I submitted a second request questioning if there had not been a quorum how had decisions been made and commission business managed? The Commission is currently in the process of backtracking and writing minutes, approving and posting minutes.

A major issue is the fact that there was NO QUORUM at the June 2017 meeting - the meeting which the Commission states they had a unanimous vote in favor of elimination of the certificates. According to the by-laws, a quorum is a majority of the appointed Commissioners. In June 2017 there were 13 appointed Commissioners - there were only 6 present for the "meeting" and that was the vote that they counted as unanimous.

In reviewing the comments (which I also obtained through a public records request) I discovered several discrepancies in the accounting of the comments and question.

- There were 70 comments received by OLS (The most comments that they have ever received on any rule)
 - **33** of those were in favor of elimination of the certificates - **15 of these 33 (45%) were identical to the "template script" that Shaun Bickley (current co-chair of the Commission) see templet below** sent out via tagging people on social media.
 - **37 of the comments in favor of keeping the special certificates were all unique stories** and examples of how these certificates have enhanced lives and also concern from families of youth in transition from high school to nothing fear that their child will not have a job at all with the elimination of certificates. There was an outpouring of love and concern expressed in these letters. I know at least two people who submitted comments who also received a response but their comments were not included in the tally of yes/no counts.

I addressed the inaccurate count with Karina Bull of the Office of Labor Standards - while I understand this has already been passed into law, the process by which it was managed was riddled with fraudulent practice. Ms. Bull's response to the corrections in the tally was:

"Our office carefully reviewed the outpour of comments in favor of retaining subminimum wage, as well as the outpour of comments in favor of prohibiting the subminimum wage. Ultimately, the final rule was reached with strong support of our former Director, Dylan Orr, former mayor Murray, and Councilmember Herbold. The more recent decision to [codify this prohibition in our Minimum Wage ordinance was passed by City Council, 8-0](#)

Most recently at the May 17, 2018 Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities Public Meeting, Shaun Bickley (Commission Co-

Chair) became extremely abusive in his body language, words and tone when he refused to answer my question if the issues of transportation, job skill development, funding, increased training for job coaches and community development of opportunities were topics that were discussed at a Commission meeting. He was not able to answer but was able to tell me how abusive I was, swear profusely at me, throw his arms around and threaten to file an "anti-harassment" order against me. I had heard from others how explosive and abusive he could be but I was still shocked at his behavior.

1. If this issue continues to be of concern to you, I ask that you read more information regarding the questionable (if not fraudulent) processes that were utilized by passing this ordinance - the history and links of what I have been able to piece together are all available on this link - [Elimination of Special Certificates in Seattle](#)
2. If you are concerned about the abusive behavior of the Commission Co-Chair, Shaun Bickley (his term actually expired April 30, 2018 and I have requested that he not be re-commissioned), please send a complaint to the [Office of Civil Rights](#) and join others who have already submitted complaints regarding this situation. You could also email Mariko Lockhart, Interim Director at mariko.lockhart@seattle.gov

My hope is that by engaging with those who did send in comments we can begin to collaborate and work together so that when decisions are made in the future, there is transparency, accountability and the welcoming of various opinions so that we can all learn and grow together in ways that best serve everyone.

If you have any other questions, comments or concerns regarding this issue, please let me know and I will do the best I can to answer them or find the information for you.

Cheryl

Cheryl Felak, RN, BSN

Because We Care - Beyond Inclusion

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[Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association](#)

[American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry](#)

Below is a copy of the script that Shaun Bickley sent out - 45% of the comments in favor of elimination of the certificates were this exact script.

[suggested script]

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Resident of Seattle, connection, etc)