



Amazon,

The COVID crisis is revealing much about our region, state, and nation – about our collective strengths and weaknesses. It will certainly change us forever, though exactly how remains to be seen. Leaders across government, health, and business owe it to our constituencies to be responsive and compassionate while so many face the burdens of the pandemic. Many businesses are stepping up to this challenge admirably, and we applaud the actions taken by Amazon to creating a small business relief fund, limiting price gouging, and hiring more people in a challenging time when many jobs are declining.

We wanted to address another set of events, though, that was brought to our attention and raises concerns about the precarious position of workers during this crisis. In recent days, Amazon has fired employees in New York, Minnesota, and here in Washington State, for speaking up about workplace safety issues which, in the context of the pandemic, are extremely serious. In New York and Minnesota, these were black warehouse workers with what they called out as COVID safety hazards in their own workplaces. In Seattle, these were women technology workers who asked fellow tech workers to support warehouse workers. This comes in the aftermath of the first disclosed death of an Amazon warehouse worker from the novel coronavirus.

All workers deserve a safe, healthy workplace, and compensation that allows them to provide for their families, whether they write code for web servers, or sort packages in a warehouse. We ask Amazon to do the following:

- Reinstatement the fired workers immediately
- Further improve warehouse safety in response to the ongoing pandemic
- Allow workers to act collectively and unionize without retaliation

As we move forward and return to work in the months to come, we will need everyone working together for the people and the prosperity of our region.

Today is a moment for our leaders – from elected officials, business executives, labor leaders, and executive directors of community-based organizations – to demonstrate the values we all share, by ensuring our economy will be rebuilt in a way that is open and fair for all who build it.

We look forward to your partnership.

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Executive Secretary-Treasurer, MLK Labor

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