



SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

36 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

2015 Board of Directors

July 17, 2015

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Dear Chair Phillips and Members of the King County Council:

In order to support the healthy development of children and youth, families and communities across King County, the Sound Cities Association (SCA) urges the King County Council to place the Best Starts for Kids levy on the November 2015 ballot for consideration by the voters. This position is unanimously supported by our Board of Directors, and by the Public Issues Committee (PIC) of SCA, on which each of our 36 cities has a voting seat.

As you know, the Sound Cities Association was founded to help cities in King County act locally and partner regionally to create vital, livable communities through advocacy, education, leadership, mutual support, and networking. The healthy development of our children is key to the future of our County, and thus of central importance to our member cities. We need to shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response on health and social issues to one that focuses on prevention and eliminating disparities by providing access to services that will allow children and youth to realize their full potential.

We want to thank the County Council for being responsive to concerns raised by cities. We are particularly pleased to see that funding for public health services such as maternity support services and the nurse family partnership are now called out specifically in the levy. We are also pleased to see the role of cities in the levy being better spelled out. By involving cities and having geographic balance in the planning an implementation of the levy, as well as ongoing oversight and governance of the levy, we will ensure that the needs of youth and children from all parts of the County are understood and addressed.

While children throughout the County have needs that can and should be addressed, we do wish to stress that it is critical that funds from the levy go where they are most needed. King County is known for its high quality of life, yet it has some of the nation's worst health and social disparities. On average, the County ranks well on social and health measures. But this masks the fact that the County faces significant inequities in health and well-being. Addressing these disparities, and ensuring that all children in our County have the opportunity to thrive, is critical to the health and well-being of our children, and our regional economy. We therefore encourage you to place this levy on the November ballot for consideration by the voters.

Sincerely,

Matt Larson  
President, Sound Cities Association  
Mayor, City of Snoqualmie

Nancy Backus  
Vice President, Sound Cities Association  
Mayor, City of Auburn

c.c. SCA Board of Directors  
SCA Public Issues Committee  
King County Executive Dow Constantine