

Response by Councilmember Sawant

Mayor Jenny Durkan's establishment has utterly failed working people and communities of color in this city. She bears responsibility for a torrent of violence by Seattle police, including the use of brutal weapons like tear gas and rubber bullets against the Black Lives Matter protest movement. Under her watch, eight community members have been killed at the hands of Seattle police, with zero officers prosecuted.

Bankrolled by corporate cash in her election campaign, Durkan has used her position to doggedly protect Amazon's corporate tax haven while working people shoulder the overwhelming burden of society. She has just declared budget cuts of nearly \$300 million, which will only exacerbate human suffering, especially in communities of color, dishonestly claiming that the cuts are "unavoidable."

This Mayor has no standing whatsoever to now disingenuously call for "the urgent need for government to work together."

Socialist Alternative and my Council office are proud to have marched, rallied, and organized with thousands of community members and activists in recent weeks to demand #JusticeForGeorgeFloyd, #BlackLivesMatter. Our movement is demanding racial and economic justice, long withheld by a pro-corporate political establishment, whose leader currently is Mayor Durkan.

As a measure of outrage ordinary people feel at Durkan and the rotten status quo over which she presides, more than 20,000 Seattleites have signed petitions calling on her to resign or be impeached. That is why Mayor Durkan's shameful attack today is not surprising.

I am proud to work with young people of color to demand that the City #DefundPolice, and redirect at least half of the bloated \$409 million police budget – which Mayor Durkan championed – to urgent community needs as decided by community organizations and coalitions. I stand with the movement in demanding that all protestors be released and all charges dropped.

I am proud to stand with African-American clergy in the Central Area, who are demanding that the city reverse its policies of racist gentrification, which have only intensified under Durkan's watch, and fund the construction of at least 1,000 new, affordable homes in the neighborhood to allow Black people to return, as part of the Amazon Tax legislation in City Council.

I am proud to unite with environmental justice activists of all backgrounds, to demand that the city establishment make good on its promise to fund the Green New Deal, instead of the empty gestures we have seen from the Durkan administration.

Durkan's attack on my office is an attack on the grassroots campaigns we've participated in and helped lead alongside many others, and the progressive victories we have all won together. While her words are directed at me and my elected office, I don't take it personally. In reality, this is an attack on working people's movements, and everything we are fighting for, by a corporate politician desperately looking to distract from her failures of leadership and politically bankrupt administration. Our movement will respond accordingly: we will fight with even greater unity and determination.