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Statement from Alphabet Workers Union-CWA in support of Seattle ordinance to ban caste discrimination

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Seattle, Washington)—Alphabet Workers Union—Communication Workers of America (AWU-CWA) stands in support of the [historic ordinance to ban caste discrimination in Seattle introduced by Councilmember Kshama Sawant](#). AWU-CWA recognizes that caste is a civil rights and a labor issue globally. The [complaints of caste discrimination arising from multiple tech companies](#) makes addressing it urgent. We write as one of the first and largest unions in the tech sector, for whom caste has become a significant issue for our rank and file members given its prevalence in Alphabet. And we join allies like [The Tech Workers for Caste Equity](#) in making a stand to ban caste discrimination in Seattle.

Workers of AWU-CWA have been organizing against caste discrimination within Alphabet and pushing the company to add caste protections to its code of conduct globally. This is why in the wake of the [historic lawsuit](#) filed by the California DFEH against Cisco for caste-based discrimination, we had [asked Alphabet to add caste as a protected category](#). Despite this, Alphabet has only created a hostile work environment for caste-oppressed workers and allies by [canceling a talk that Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Executive Director of Equality Labs](#) was scheduled to give, on the topic

of caste in newsrooms. The talk was canceled as opponents of caste equity at Alphabet spread discriminatory and casteist disinformation about Equality Labs and Thenmozhi herself, who comes from an oppressed-caste background. The organizer, [Tanuja Gupta](#) was retaliated against (leading to her resignation) for wanting to further the cause of caste equity at the workplace. Following this incident, due to the AWU-CWA caste campaign efforts, [Google announced new policies for external speakers](#) that don't undermine Google's culture of belonging. Alphabet's is legally mandated to prohibit caste-based discrimination in India, so its anti-discrimination policy in India explicitly lists caste as a protected category, but the company has yet to expand the policy globally. This is why Seattle City's ordinance matters. Google currently has over 4000 workers in Seattle and over 7200 workers in the state of Washington. This ordinance would legally bind private institutions to enforce caste based protections in their workplaces, including Alphabet which has a sizable presence in Seattle and Washington. If an ordinance like this had existed, victims of caste discrimination would have had a legal recourse to justice.

"As Seattle considers this historic step to address this civil rights issue and address the discrimination that caste-oppressed citizens and workers face in the city, We urge the city council to weigh in on the side of human, civil, gender and worker rights and vote yes on this Caste ordinance to ensure Seattle is safe and welcoming for all. We also condemn the attacks on caste oppressed workers and civil rights organizations. These are anti-democratic tactics to deplatform caste oppressed communities from achieving legal rights to advocate against discrimination. We urge the council to prevent disinformation, bigotry and violence against partners like Equality Labs and the coalition working to ban caste in Seattle. These attacks are not unlike the gaslighting that workers face whenever they take on management and we urge you to continue to create safe space for all protected classes of people coming to break the silence on caste" said Alex Gorowara, Software Engineer at Alphabet and member of Alphabet Workers Union-CWA.

Please reach out to us directly if you have questions about this statement. A copy of

this statement is available on our website here.

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