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**From:** Prashant Nema <pnema.contact@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2023 5:48 PM  
**To:** LEG\_CouncilMembers  
**Subject:** Vote Yes on Caste ban: Workplace Testimony enclosed

CAUTION: External Email

I am enclosing two testimony to explain why we need institutional support to handle caste based discrimination and harassment in Seattle's workplaces. These protection do not target me as a South Asian, nor a Hindu, nor any other protected class. They only target me if I am someone who discriminates based on the family they are born in.

Enclosing two testimonies in this email for your awareness.

First testimony is by me and the second one is of a friend who wants to remain anonymous as there could be retaliation at the friend's workplace

**Prashant Nema**, a veteran tech worker who has worked in Microsoft, Dell/EMC, Meta (Facebook). “As an insider into the dominant caste community I can confirm widespread practice of caste in our City and surrounding area. I have many friends and colleagues who will never refer any candidate who has been a beneficiary of affirmative action for a job in their company, no matter how much experience they have. This comes from their deep rooted hatred of those from the so-called lower caste and not from ignorance of how affirmative action works. Referrals are a great source of opportunity for work and for more lenient interviews. Derogatory jokes even at workplaces about people from marginalized communities and their social justice heroes is also common in closed circles. Often at workplaces members from so called higher castes also flash their caste pride making the place unwelcomed for the members from oppressed communities. I was also the witness to the derogatory caste emails at Microsoft that were mentioned in the Oct 27 2020 edition of Seattle times. Many times people invite their colleagues to Indian worship places and explore their caste there. I have also seen teams in some of these companies where managers hire more than 30% people from the same caste. If any company runs a simple estimator on their org charts it is easy to see what I have said. At least anyone who grew up in a casteist society can clearly see these clusters. This is clear sign of discrimination”

**Bhim**

I was born in India and after my graduation in Electronics and communication Engineering, I started working for major Indian tech companies called X since December 2006 As SAP technical consultant.

I came to the United States in August 2009 for an EBS project at major US company called Y and was working at Beaverton.

During my tenure at X, I would feel my progress was being halted, being one of the better performing Employee for X at Y. I never felt appreciated for my Work by X Manager, whereas I got many appreciations letter and medal from Y, for my contribution to various Y initiatives and Project. I noticed a sudden change in the Behavior of my Manager after he got to know which caste I belong to. Earlier he used to invite me to his house for food and drinks as I was among Top rated X employee at Y. Rating is generated by the Y COE team(center of Excellence team). I did not get any promotion and even my role was not changed, almost working for 6 years at X and 3+ years assigned at Y. Whereas other consultants who joined X after working at Y as consultant to X and even from X offshore employees got promotion.

I had to go to India in January 2012 for my marriage, because of VISA stamping date availability issues I had to stay a bit longer in India which was the responsibility of the X VISA team. After getting my VISA I had to return back to the USA to join the team at Y in Beaverton, after working for March, my payroll was not generated from February onwards stating that I left for India. My manager had requested to stop my payroll after I left for India. This process or policy I had never heard or happened to anyone in X. After coming back, I requested to reinstate my payroll, but that was not happening, so to take care of my financial obligation I applied for Vehicle loan at X, A per offshore employee policy that was automatically approved. Finally, my payroll was generated in the month of MAY 2012.

At that time, I brought to X Notice that my February paycheck has not yet been generated as I was on PTO for 10 days for the month of February. But nothing was done.

I decided to make a move from X and got a new Job offer from another Indian IT company.

So, I sent my Resignation letter with two weeks' notice and my manager initially accepted my resignation and discussed my projects and transition plan with me and the Y Team.

On my last day at X my manager told me that I had to give two months' notice as I am an offshore employee, otherwise my exit will be marked as not a clean exit. I asked everyone from left for new Job they all gave 2 weeks' notice and almost most of them are offshore employee's whom I knew personally. I informed my X Manager it's too late. I can't because my travel arrangements have been done and I was flying to Minnesota the next day and Joining my Employer on the coming Monday. I Again said to him if you had told me earlier when we discussed my resignation, if that was the case I would have asked for more time from my new employer to join the company, but I can't do anything about it now.

After Year Passed by I joined a major tech company Z in Seattle and the company was sponsoring me for green card, so for Green card processing I need to get detailed experience letter from X, I asked my Manager repeated to provide me the detailed experience letter even after providing reference of my previous managers and colleague with whom I had worked with my request was turned down my repeated request. I could say this never happened to any of my high caste colleagues who worked in X and Left X in the USA after giving two weeks' notice, as I asked them about their process of getting a X Experience letter.

During this period when I was requesting for Detailed experience letter X Final settlement team came back to me for unpaid Vehicle loan which I took in April 2012, when my payroll was stopped and I again had to bring to their notice that my February 2012 paycheck has not yet been generated and please generated my payroll and deposit the remain amount to me after deduction of Vehicle loan. So the final Settlement was done after almost 16 months of leaving X and I was still not able to get a detailed experience letter because my Indian manager at X said mine was not a clean exit and he couldn't provide me with a detailed experience letter from X.

Finally, I had got the Detailed experience letter from my colleagues at X with whom I had worked because that was an Important part in my green card application of having worked 6 years at X for GC application.

I had a great time in the new company Z. My manager was not an Indian and I got ample chance to display my talent and got several promotions. Recently I was moved under an Indian manager from the highest caste. He was friendly initially but when he saw me eating and discussing meat one day he found out that I was not from a higher caste. Things have changed since then. Our team has 60% people from the same highest caste and I feel that my manager has been trying to provide me with non-impactful work and is avoiding having meetings with me. But he constantly checks if I am working (WFH) or not. I am always confused about what he wants to do. I fear a repeat of my previous experience and losing my job in this difficult layoff period. An ordinance of this nature will help in many ways. First it will be a deterrent for those with a casteist mindset. There will be no confusion that the civil rights department is equipped to handle such cases. It will also help me be confident while working that I have a recourse to justice.