

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

MOTION NO. 21-201

ESTABLISHING WRITTEN GUIDELINES FOR THE
PRESENTATION OF INVOCATIONS AT GENERAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, legislative prayer, such as an opening prayer at a council meeting, has long been understood as compatible with the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution (See *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, 572 U.S. 565 (2014)); and

WHEREAS, such a prayer takes place at the opening of legislative sessions, where it is meant to lend gravity to the occasion and reflect values long part of the heritage of the United States; and

WHEREAS, prayer that invites lawmakers to reflect upon shared ideals and common ends before they embark on the fractious business of governing serves that legitimate function and is, therefore, constitutional; and

WHEREAS, opening prayers seek peace for the nation, wisdom for its lawmakers, and justice for its people, appealing to universal values embodied not only in religious traditions but also in our founding documents and laws; and

WHEREAS, the Council added an invocation to the second general legislative agenda of each month to take place following the tribal land acknowledgement via Amended Ordinance 21-033;

NOW, THEREFORE, ON MOTION the Snohomish County Council finds and determines that:

1. Invocations offered pursuant to this stated practice will preserve, promote and protect the general health, safety and welfare of the County, and thereby adopts this policy. The information contained in the recital clauses above is adopted as findings and conclusions supporting this motion.
2. An invocation may be offered at the second general legislative session of each month on a rotating, first-come, first-served basis, and be provided for no more than two minutes on a voluntary basis by persons affiliated with local faith-based organizations and ministries. As an alternative, a group or individual having no religious affiliation may request the opportunity to offer a brief statement to reflect on the gravity of the moment, seek peace for the nation, wisdom for its lawmakers and justice for its people, or generally appeal to universal values of our country.
3. Finally, any group or individual may request a moment of silence in place of an invocation.

4. Attachment A, Invocation Guidelines, is adopted to aid in implementing invocations under this motion.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2021.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

Council Chair

ATTEST:

Asst. Clerk of the Council