



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
CHARLES ALLEN, COUNCILMEMBER – WARD 6**

**Safe at Home Act of 2015**

According to the last available data, from September 2010 to September 2011, DC Fire & EMS estimated that it had treated approximately 1,600 patients older than 65 years of age whose chief complaint was some sort of fall. Many of these patients had repeat calls for similar injuries. In 2013, the Chief Medical Examiner reported that there were 85 accidental deaths caused by blunt injuries due to fall, with all decedents 65 years or older.

The majority of these falls occurred in the home. These are preventable injuries and preventable deaths. In many cases, minor modifications can be made to homes to make them more accessible – and thereby safer – for our residents who are elderly or disabled. But many of these residents live on fixed incomes and are unable to afford the installation of a bathtub grab bar or other minor safety fixes.

The Safe at Home Act would address this problem by:

- Establishing a small-dollar home modification grant program – up to \$10,000 – with a simple application process;
- Helping low-income residents finance modestly-priced but essential accessibility modifications such as ramps, grab bars, and barrier-free doors and door handles;
- Allowing income eligible residents – both homeowners and tenants with landlord permission – to make accessibility modifications quickly, with an application turnaround time of 60 days.

The bill also includes a Safe at Home tax credit for homeowners who pay outright to make accessibility modifications to their homes, allowing those residents to receive a tax credit of 50 percent of the modification cost or \$5,000, whichever is less.

The Safe at Home Act of 2015 will help our residents make the small-dollar changes to make their homes safer and more accessible. These changes will help prevent falls, and unnecessary hospitalizations and institutionalization, thereby enabling more low-income seniors and others to safely age in place in our community.