



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

Private Security Camera System Incentive Program Emergency Act of 2016

About Private Security Camera Use in the District

The Metropolitan Police Department often relies on video footage as an investigative tool to identify suspects. A recent MPD newsletter quoted Chief Cathy Lanier saying, "Video is a force multiplier for MPD. It gives us an extra set of eyes by allowing us to provide much needed situational awareness." MPD's online video feed reveals 20% of the videos posted are from privately owned security cameras. It is clear that private security cameras can help deter crime and aid the police in holding individuals accountable for criminal acts.

About the Private Security Camera Incentive Program Emergency Act

In September, as part of the supplemental budget process, Mayor Bowser asked the Council to approve \$500,000 for a security camera incentive program. The Council approved the request with the requirement that the Mayor submit details of the program to Council for approval by legislation. The Mayor then submitted Bill 21-497, the Private Security Camera Incentive Program Emergency Act of 2015, which would offer rebates to residential property owners, business owners, and religious institutions that install security cameras and register those cameras with MPD. The funds would expire September 30, 2016.

By adjusting the Mayor's proposed rebate amounts, Councilmember Allen's Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (ANS) nearly doubles the number of maximum rebates possible, while maintaining a generous incentive: Up to \$200 per camera installed and registered, with a maximum rebate of \$500 per residential property and \$750 per business, nonprofit, or religious institution, which often have a larger property footprint.

Councilmember Allen's effort also ensures that the highest crime area in each Ward receives priority for rebates. It extends eligibility to commercial and nonprofit locations, and also creates a special fund for the appropriation, allowing the funding to be used beyond September 30. These changes have major impact – nearly doubling the number of rebates possible and easing the time crunch that would have jammed up implementation.

The ANS preserves the Mayor's requirement that a system must be registered with MPD to receive a rebate. This registration will help MPD identify possible sources of video footage following crime in a neighborhood and increases the likelihood that, upon request, it will be shared with MPD to help identify suspects, shed light on how the crimes were committed, and possibly assist in prosecution.