



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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February 21, 2018

Mayor Muriel Bowser  
Office of the Mayor  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mayor Bowser:

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2019 budget submission, I want to share with you some of my priorities for the upcoming budget. As a city, county, and state rolled all into one, the District does many things and therefore has many demands on its tax dollars. Yet we must remain focused on our biggest challenges and making the key investments that will move us forward as a city. It is true that the District in many ways is thriving, and we want that to continue, but not every resident has experienced the rising tide. We need to address this inequality with more urgency.

The achievement gap between black and white students remains vast. The cost of housing is increasingly out of reach, and many find it difficult to make ends meet. Our unemployment rate has ticked up recently. We need to continue to diversify our economy, yet many businesses say it is frustrating to work with DC government and that friction slows down business growth.

Plus, the wrongheaded policies of the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress make things even more difficult. We must show leadership at the local level. I hope we can use the next few months to work together to make important investments to address our challenges, and continue our work to make the District fair, equitable, and inclusive for all.

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*RESPONDING TO TRUMP AND CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS*

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I wholeheartedly support your efforts to make us a state, and it is certainly a frustrating time to lack a voice in our federal legislature. We both strongly disagree with President Trump and the Republicans who control Congress. The recent federal tax legislation, for example, is an irresponsible, deficit-

financed tax cut that will mainly benefit the very rich at the expense of working families and will do little to stimulate the economy. As we continue to understand its impact on the District, I think it is important to take some initial steps to mitigate any harm it might do to District residents or our finances.

- ***Create a new education tax credit to help offset the impact of the federal tax bill***  
***No cost***

I recently introduced legislation to create a nonrefundable DC income tax credit for donations to a new government-run public education fund. By donating to the fund, District taxpayers who itemize will be able to support education funding and get a local income tax credit that will reduce their local tax liability. The charitable donation to the new fund would be also deductible on federal tax returns under current IRS guidelines. This will address the penalty many District taxpayers will face as a result of the recently implemented federal tax legislation, which caps state and local tax deductions on federal income taxes to \$10,000.

I ask you to work with me on implementing this tax credit. It is a win-win for the District. In 2015, more than 130,000 filers in the District deducted an average of more than \$17,000 per tax filer. This is why many residents rushed to pre-pay 2018 property taxes, so the payment could be included in 2017 deductions before the new rules took effect. With the new tax credit, overall tax liability would be lowered for individual filers, but District revenues would not go down, and would likely see a slight increase. I hope we could use this additional revenue to pay for important and unmet education needs, like fully funding childcare vouchers or funding a larger out-of-school-time program.

- ***Get our affordable housing money on the street faster***  
***No cost***

While many of the federal tax provisions attacking affordable housing were eventually removed from the final tax bill, the recent corporate tax cuts will have a negative effect on affordable housing across the country, mainly in the reduced value of various tax credits such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). It isn't clear yet just how much this will slow down private construction of affordable housing, but there is a simple, no-cost change we can make to how we support affordable housing that can speed up construction. Specifically, we can allow the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to put out applications for funding from our Housing Production Trust Fund one fiscal year in advance. The Trust Fund is our best tool for supporting the construction of affordable housing, and thank you for your commitment to fully funding it. But currently, DHCD waits to issue applications until after a fiscal year has begun, potentially unnecessarily slowing down the process. There's no reason DHCD can't issue applications in advance, at least for the funding that our Chief Financial Officer has certified (as you know, we put a portion of our deed and recordation taxes into the Trust Fund every year, which the CFO certifies four years in advance). Providing DHCD with the authority to solicit applications one year in advance means affordable housing units will be built or preserved faster and increase the impact of the Housing Production Trust Fund, at no cost. I strongly urge you to support this simple change.

- ***Keep the District's estate tax at previous levels***  
***Approximately \$5 million a year in new revenue***

The estate tax remains our most progressive revenue source, affecting only a small number of very wealthy individuals in the District. In such a progressive city as ours, I'm surprised that we have cut it several times over the past few years. And now, because we explicitly tied our estate tax to the federal threshold which has risen to \$11 million, we will potentially lose millions in tax revenue a year. With inequality in the District at record highs, such a move is unconscionable. I strongly urge you to reject this cut from the Republican-controlled Congress, and instead "decouple" from the federal estate tax levels to keep our estate tax threshold at \$5 million. Councilmember Allen introduced a bill earlier this to do just that, and I am a proud supporter. The District decoupled from the federal estate tax in the early 2000s, because we knew the federal policy was going in the wrong direction. And that's still true today. This change should bring in at least \$5 million a year, which we can use to help fund more progressive tax policies, like increasing our evidence-tested programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit.

- ***Restore the progressivity lost to the tax cut***

I understand that our Chief Financial Officer is studying the effects of the federal tax bill on the District, both on individuals and our District finances. That analysis will likely both show that our overall tax incidence will be less progressive (owing to large high-income tax cuts) and that the District will receive additional revenue (owing to the federal tax base-broadening provisions that our tax code is tied to). Thanks to the changes recommended by the recent Tax Revision Commission, our tax code is one of the most progressive in the nation. We should consider ways to use any additional revenue from the federal tax changes to help keep this progressivity. This could include steps like increasing our Earned Income Tax Credit, which puts money in the pocket of our low-income workers. Or increasing our Schedule H housing credit, which helps our low-income renters and homeowners.

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### *EMPOWERING OUR RESIDENTS*

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I have spent the past year as chair of the Committee on Labor and Workforce Development talking to residents, businesses, and District agencies to see how we can both expand economic opportunities for residents and build a workforce system that meets the needs of our employers. As you know, while our overall unemployment rate is relatively low, it remains stubbornly high for some of our residents. The unemployment rate for black residents is more than six times that of our white residents. At the same time, we spend more than a hundred million dollars on our workforce development programs, but we don't know which programs work. We want to put policies in place that make us attract a talented workforce and keep our city competitive with our peers.

- ***Ensure full-funding of the Universal Paid Leave Act***

I know many members of your administration have been working hard to implement our landmark paid family leave law, and I want to thank you for your continued support to ensure that we have a strong paid leave program. When the Universal Paid Leave Act became D.C. law, we confirmed that the District continues to be on the leading edge of passing forward-thinking policies that makes the District a fairer place for our residents and workers. Now that the Chairman has announced he will not be moving any of the alternative paid family leave bills, I look forward to seeing DC workers start receiving paid medical, family, and parental leave in 2020 when the program is fully up and running.

We both understand that in order to successfully provide this benefit to workers, we must fully fund the start-up of this program, with trained staff, a full-featured website, and back-end software system. I am hopeful that with the use of modern IT development methods, we can implement this program in a more cost-effective manner than was originally anticipated. In the meantime, I encourage you to allocate the appropriate level of start-up funds to ensure the program has a strong start.

- ***FUND A SOFT SKILLS PILOT FOR SUMMER YOUTH  
\$500,000 in one-time funds***

District employers repeatedly say the biggest obstacles they face in hiring and retaining workers are life skills like showing up on time, dressing appropriately, and knowing how to communicate effectively. These habits are most easily formed when we are young, which makes the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program the perfect place to teach and reinforce these habits. While MBSYEP is only six weeks long, it reaches thousands of youth, and these essential skills should be taught as a foundation of the work experience.

The Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (MBSYEP) is a hallmark of our city's workforce development system. I understand Director Donald and the staff in DOES are exploring different ways to continue soft skills training in MBSYEP, and legislation I introduced late last year would mandate rigorous soft skills training for all MBSYEP participants. While we continue to work with your administration on this legislation, I propose we add a small amount of money to the FY 2019 budget for a large soft skill pilot program for around 500 participants. The pilot should offer training in these essential skills in a variety of ways, including: a week long, pre-program "bootcamp;" a weekly series throughout the six weeks of MBSYEP; interactive digital badging; and others. Because we want to better understand what works and what doesn't, the pilot should also include an independent evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the various methods in helping teach soft skills to participants with different needs and backgrounds, such as age and participants disconnected from school and work. This small investment can help us make MBSYEP even better for the generations of Washingtonians who will participate in the program in the years to come.

- ***Fund the Workforce Development System Transparency Act  
\$200,000 in recurring funding***

We spend tens of thousands of dollars a year to get our residents into work, but we know little about the return on investment. Does our investment lead to long-term, living wage employment? We need to know the answer.

Legislation I introduced last year, and recently passed by the Council, would create just such a guide. The legislation directs the Workforce Investment Council to compile an annual Workforce Development System Expenditure Guide about the more than \$100 million the District spends on workforce development and adult education programs each year. This guide will be invaluable to policymakers, businesses, job seekers, training and service providers, and other organizations in the workforce development system. It will enable the public to see what programs exist, what services they provide, what fields they provide training in, and how they are performing. With this information, we can leverage our taxpayer dollars in the most effective and efficient way to help our residents find jobs and help our businesses find capable workers. I look forward to working with you to find the funding necessary to do this important work.

- ***Continue funding the Career Pathways Innovation Fund  
\$1.5 million in recurring funding***

The District is at the forefront of best practices in workforce training with its Career Pathways Innovation Fund, a training program created in 2015 that doesn't just get people a job, but prepares them for a career. The program also now leverages the expertise and resources of OSSE's Adult and Family Education program, providing integrated education and training to individuals in need of basic education. The Council identified in legislation a special purpose fund from which resources could be available each year for the Career Pathways program. Should such funding not be available in the coming years, I hope that you will work to identify other resources for the Career Pathways Innovation Fund so that this important training program can continue.

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## *HOUSING*

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A focus we have both shared over the past three years in office has been affordable housing. It is by far the most important issue to most of our residents today, a fact reflected both in polling and in the conversations I have with constituents almost every day. The median single-family home price today is now almost \$700,000, a price that is out of reach for many District residents. Almost a third of District residents pay more than half of their income on housing. Housing is the main reason many feel that the District is unaffordable, and a significant cause of displacement. While your administration has taken significant steps to increase the amount of affordable housing produced in the District, there is more we can and should be doing.

- ***Fully fund the Housing Production Trust Fund  
\$120 million in recurring funding***

Your ongoing commitment to solving our affordable housing crisis has made the District of Columbia the envy of many local governments across the country. As is often stated, we now invest more local funds in affordable housing – per capita – than any state in the country. While the District aggressively strives to produce and preserve as much affordable housing as possible, the President and his administration are actively damaging our efforts.

The most immediate threat is the damage that has been done to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. LIHTCs are the largest financing tool for affordable housing development, and they are the perfect partner to our Housing Production Trust Fund.

Unfortunately, the new tax plan has created an environment where the LIHTC benefits are not as attractive to investors as they have been in the past and that has led to a dramatic drop in the price of those credits. That means our HPTF money will not go as far as it has in the past as we must fill the gaps created by the LIHTC price drop. A project that previously had \$10 million in LIHTC credits and \$10 million in HPTF money will now only have, say, \$5 million in LIHTC, and will need an additional \$5 million in HPTF funding to backfill the reduced LIHTC value. That's why I hope you will consider increasing your investment in the Trust Fund to \$120 million. We need that level of funding to simply keep up the unprecedented work DHCD has done since you took office.

- ***Increase Preservation Funding  
\$10 million in one-time money***

It is cheaper to preserve affordable housing than build new housing. Therefore, we need to put a larger focus on preserving whatever affordable housing we have left. DHCD has spent much of the last year designing the Preservation Unit and finding appropriate staff to lead it. As that effort progresses, I believe you should consider making an additional one-time \$10 million investment in the unit, on top of the existing \$10 million in funding it already has. We know all too well that we are losing affordable housing units at an alarming rate. The Preservation Unit is a critical piece of your strategy, and I believe seeding it with a \$20 million investment is a good use of our local funds.

As a source for this funding, I would suggest using the more than \$11 million raised from the auction of District-owned vacant properties through the new Vacant to Vibrant program. This auction has clearly been very successful so far and will hopefully turn these properties into affordable housing relatively quickly. That is why I originally introduced the Property Disposition Reform Amendment Act last year, which would have these same properties sold by a real estate agent. The 33 properties sold under the Vacant to Vibrant program represent a significant improvement in District-owned properties sold, and I hope you will continue the program to further reduce the number of vacant properties the District owns.

- ***Elderly and Disabled Tenants Rental Assistance and Reverse Mortgage Prevention***

Earlier this year I introduced two bills that I believe will have a significant impact on our elderly population and currently fill an unmet need. I hope you will consider including these measures in your FY 2019 budget.

The first bill is the Elderly and Disabled Tenants Rental Assistance Amendment Act of 2017. This program would provide a shallow rental subsidy of no more than \$500 to elderly and disabled residents who are rent burdened. Many of these residents are on the DC Housing Authority waiting list, but likely won't receive full vouchers because we rightly prioritize people who are experiencing homelessness. A \$500 rental subsidy would drastically ease their rent burden and stop them from having to choose between rent, food, medicine, and other necessities. I ask that you consider allocating \$1 million in recurring funding to launch a pilot for this voucher program that would be administered by the DC Housing Authority. Based on information provided by HUD, there could be as many as 13,000 people who would qualify for this program. Beginning this as a pilot would allow DCHA to measure the efficacy of the initiative and redesign it based on information they learn. We can then increase the funding if the program is as successful as I believe it will be.

The second bill I introduced was the Reverse Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2017. This legislation would create a new loan program for residents facing foreclosure for nonpayment of property insurance and taxes. While this is not a large population of District residents, the stories we heard from residents are evidence that this is a problem that is causing serious damage to our elderly residents and their families. In one instance, a long-time homeowner was facing foreclosure over a mere \$8,000 debt. It is in the homeowner's best interest and in the interest of the District to help these people remain in their homes. I ask that you include \$500,000 in one-time funding in your FY19 budget for this program. The program would be designed so that, once the property is relinquished or the reverse mortgage is paid off, the District would recoup its funds making this a self-replenishing program. It is a small investment of District money that would make a huge difference in people's lives.

- ***Continue Contributions to the Public Housing Repair Fund***

The federal government's attack on affordable housing is well-evidenced in its treatment of public housing. While these communities are critical to housing our most vulnerable residents, Congress has cut funding year after year, and we have no reason to believe this year will be any different. Meanwhile, the District's housing authority has a capital-needs shortfall that is well over half a million dollars.

In the FY 2016 budget, the Council agreed to my proposal to allow unspent Local Rent Supplement Program funds to flow directly to the Public Housing Repair Fund. Since then, the Housing Authority has made significant repairs to the neglected properties and the new

Executive Director says he plans to continue that effort. I encourage you to continue allowing these funds to flow directly to address housing authority needs.

- ***Fully Fund Housing and Homeward DC Vouchers***

I want to congratulate you on your very successful Home for the Holidays initiative. You and your team worked hard to accomplish something most thought couldn't be done, and you even exceeded your original target. Our Local Rent Supplement Program, Targeted Affordable Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers were critical to that success. These programs allow our agencies the flexibility to best serve our residents in ways the federal government doesn't.

The Home for the Holidays initiative shows just how important our voucher programs are to achieving our affordable housing goals and the Homeward DC plan for addressing the homelessness crisis in DC. I hope you will fund our project-based and tenant-based Local Rent Supplement Program at last year's levels at a minimum, and consider increasing those numbers to continue to chip away at the 40,000 person-long waiting list. I also ask that you fully fund the Targeted Affordable Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing voucher programs in line with the requirements of the Homeward DC plan. Your efforts are making a tremendous difference to residents experiencing homelessness and who are severely rent-burdened, but we cannot afford to lessen these efforts. Full funding is necessary for continued success in housing our neighbors.

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*PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM*

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Our education system is one of our most important tools for reducing inequality. Just look at programs like our adult learning programs, where we help our older residents learn basic skills and get their GEDs. Our adult learning providers, such as Academy of Hope, are making a big difference in these residents' lives. I want to thank you for implementing the adult learner transportation subsidy program I funded in this year's budget, which will make it easier for these learners to get to class. There are a couple other programs like that where I think a small investment can have an outsized impact in our education system.

- ***INCREASE THE CHILDCARE REIMBURSEMENT RATE TO COVER ACTUAL COSTS***  
**\$15 million in recurring funding**

The District has seen a steady increase in its infant and child population for nearly a decade. Thanks to the efforts of District leadership through the years, families are coming here, staying here, and raising their children here. But despite this encouraging trend, the cost of childcare is still one of the most significant expenses for families here in the District, at over \$20,000 a year. And for those parents who receive subsidized vouchers, their options for finding affordable childcare that will accept their vouchers can be enormously difficult. I applaud your commitment to addressing the cost of childcare in the FY 2018 budget, and I hope that the FY 2019 budget will go even further. In particular, I am asking that you include at least \$15 million



in the budget to raise the reimbursement rate to compensate the actual costs of providing care in the District.

Under your administration, OSSE is currently conducting an analysis to better understand the actual cost of childcare in the District. Nevertheless, because of previous studies, we believe the subsidy only covers, at most, 70 percent of the average cost of childcare. Because of that, depending on a center's operations and location, a childcare provider may be unwilling to accept a subsidized voucher because the rate simply does not cover enough of the actual cost of care. Last year, with help from the Council, the reimbursement rate was raised by approximately \$5 million. While this offset some of the costs for providers, the money was one-time funding and not enough to fully cover the actual costs of care. As centers prepare for the increase in the minimum wage and other associated regulations, it is vital that the city make sure our vouchers cover the actual cost of care. This will not only expand the number of places that will accept subsidized vouchers, it will also be a significant step towards making childcare more affordable in the District.

- ***FUND OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME GRANTS***  
**\$25 million in recurring funding**

Nearly 30 years ago—through the establishment of the D.C. Trust—the District made a commitment to provide enriching opportunities for the city's youth with an investment in out-of-school time (OST) programs. While the decision was remarkable at the time, repeated problems and controversies with the Trust ultimately left valuable OST programs without a stable source of funding. Recently, with your help, and through the creation of the Office of Out of School Time Grants and Youth Outcomes, the District has started to turn the tide. I applaud your administration's efforts and thank you for providing over \$4 million in FY 2018 to ensure that the city's youth continue to have access to valuable OST programs.

While this is a great step towards reaffirming our commitment to the city's youth, I believe that we should invest even more. In evaluating after-school and OST programs in the District, both the D.C. Policy Center and the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute agree that a significant number of children from low-income households still do not have access to these programs. This is concerning because a continued lack of access to after-school and OST programs could diminish our efforts to close the achievement gap. Given the importance of OST programs and the positive effects they have on our children, I am asking that your FY 2019 budget include an additional funding of up to \$25 million to ensure that nearly every District youth have access to an after-school or OST program in the city.

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*INVESTING IN OUR RESIDENTS*

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A lot of my priorities for this budget are focused on making the District a fairer and more equitable city. But I think we can also do more to invest in our District in a more general sense, from improving our democracy, helping residents support the causes they care about, and reclaiming our title of fittest city in the nation.

- ***INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SLOTS AVAILABLE IN DISTRICT SUMMER CAMPS***

Every summer our residents who are parents of young children are faced with a difficult choice: pay the high cost of private summer camps or try to get one of the few coveted spots in our Department of Parks and Recreation summer camps. These DPR camps are a wonderful resource for our residents, providing high-quality activities for our youngest residents while their parents work, and at a cost far lower than most private camps. However, it can be difficult to get into many of our best camps, since the demand far exceed the supply, especially in certain parts of our city. Unfortunately, the current process is first-come, first-served, with many in-demand camps filling up literally within one or two minutes. This process makes it hard for our lower-income children to get into the best camps, which contributes to summer learning losses that then make it harder for children from lower-income families to keep up with their wealthier peers in school. I hope I can work with you and our exemplary DPR staff to look at camp demand across the city, and see if there's a way to increase the number of slots at the most popular District operated summer camps in the District. That way, we can help both the District's parents and its children to reach their full potential while our kids become Explorers, Engineers, and strong swimmers!

- ***CREATE A VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM  
\$150,000 in recurring funds***

Our living wage program has been in place for years and has successfully raised the wages of many District contractors. But there are many businesses across the District who choose to pay a living wage for their workers, above the mandated minimum wage. For instance, the Washington Post last year profiled Well-Paid Maids, owned by Aaron Seyedian, which pays a living wage for its employees. Aaron explained that paying a living wage is a moral issue for him, and he hopes it drives a message that companies should "see employees as assets, not expenses." The District should highlight local employers like Well-Paid Maids as models and encourage more employers to voluntarily go above and beyond the minimum wage. As well, consumers might decide to support businesses in which they know their purchases support a living wage.

Last year, I introduced legislation to create a new living wage certification program in the Department of Small and Local Business Development. DLSBD would set up (or contract out to a nonprofit) the voluntary program, where employers can apply to certify that they pay their employees a living wage (currently \$13.95 under the District's Living Wage law). Employers would then be able to display a living wage logo in their businesses or on their products, advertising that they have been certified by DSLBD. These logos would help employers differentiate themselves, much in the same way the Made in DC logo does, and it helps shoppers find and do business with companies that pay a living wage. This is a win-win for DC and our local living wage businesses.

- ***EXPAND THE HOURS FOR DPR POOLS AND FITNESS CENTERS  
Approximately \$5 million in recurring funds***

While I was disappointed to see the District lose its crown as the fittest city in the nation after three years in a row in the top spot, I want to thank you for your previous efforts to improve our

RESIDENTS' health. In particular, I want to thank you again for expanding the hours for our outdoor pools. This has resulted in our largest crowds ever for our pools, with thousands more residents enjoying the expanded hours. I hope we can build on this success to open the pools even earlier, especially so that parents of young children can enjoy the benefits of our great outdoor pool network. I would also ask that we expand our fitness center hours. I again applaud your action waiving all fees for residents at our fitness centers, which has gone a long way to increasing their usage. Unfortunately, these centers are not open before many people go to work—which fitness experts say is the best time to make fitness a routine. Expanding the hours for these facilities would have a relatively small cost, but would have an outsized benefit, and help us stay the fittest city in the nation. That's why I was glad to see that you recently announced a pilot with three rec centers, opening them at 6am. This is a great start, and I encourage you to expand it to the rest of the city as soon as possible.

- **FULLY FUND LANDMARK PUBLIC FINANCING LEGISLATION**  
**\$2.8 million in FY 2019**

Many District residents support removing corporate money from District campaigns, a step the federal government took over a century ago. You have run many successful campaigns, so I know you know how it is unfortunate that money is a measure of candidate viability, not the quality of their ideas. Funding this bill is a big priority for me this year, as it is for many other Councilmembers. I hope we can work together to fund the bill, and put in place a robust public financing program to strengthen our democracy.

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### *TRANSPORTATION*

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Our transportation system should be a vehicle for success, not an impediment to work or play. I am glad that you are such a strong supporter of our Metro system, and are fighting for a regional solution to its long-term funding problem. Metro is the circulatory system of the District, bringing in hundreds of thousands of workers from outside the District, and helping thousands of District residents get around town at a low cost. But I believe there is more to do to make transportation in our city fair and equitable for all.

- **FULLY FUND LEGISLATION TO END THE REVOCATION OF DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR LOW INCOME DRIVERS**

While I'm an advocate and user of our public transportation networks, many residents still need access to a vehicle for their job, especially many low-income residents. One way we can help these is to remove unnecessary barriers. Currently, the District's practice is to revoke a resident's driver's license when they are simply unable to pay a parking ticket. But the impacts of this policy can be enormous for individuals. Studies have shown that revoking a driver's license from low-income drivers makes them more likely to lose their job. It also has a more human cost. It forces our residents to make impossible choices between committing a felony by driving on a suspended license, or being unable to take their children to childcare, their ailing

family members to the hospital, or to go to the grocery store to get food for their family. I recently introduced legislation to change this unfortunate practice, and I look forward to working with your administration to make sure that none of our low-income residents lose the ability to feed their family because they forgot to feed the meter.

- ***BUILD THE UNION MARKET METRO TUNNEL***  
***\$15 million in one-time capital funds***

Union Market is, by all measures, booming. It is poised to add thousands of new residences, hundreds of thousands of square feet of new retail, and lots of new office space. While I'm disappointed that the Council decided to approve the Tax Increment Financing for more parking at the site, I hope we can both agree that we should also improve Union Market's transit accessibility. There are plans to build a new tunnel connecting the NoMa Metro station to the east side of the tracks, cutting the time it takes to walk from the station to the Market (and Gallaudet) almost in half. However, the plans are not yet funded. This relatively small capital investment would have an outsized impact on the quality of life for residents by reducing Union Market's reliance on cars, and ensure the Union Market is an accessible destination of millions of workers, shoppers, diners, and tourists for decades to come.

I look forward to discussing these and many other issues in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elissa Silverman', written in a cursive style.

Elissa Silverman  
Councilmember, At-Large