



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004  
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**Elissa Silverman**  
Councilmember, At-Large  
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September 11, 2020

Mr. Steve Walker  
Director, Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Director Walker:

As a member of the DC Council's Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, I pay close attention to the management of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) and its real estate assets. Over the last year, I have become more and more troubled about decisions made by those in charge of DCHA, especially since the Board of Commissioners seems quite divided on critical policy and staffing questions. The recent and abrupt dismissal of Vice Chair Franselene St. Jean-Clarke from the Board of Commissioners took me by surprise; it also raises red flags for me whether the swift removal was made to silence dissenting board voices.

It is my understanding that St. Jean-Clarke was surprised as well. An hour after she asked Director Tyrone Garrett for outstanding answers about a controversial development deal and the dismissal of DCHA's general counsel, which is now the subject of a whistleblower lawsuit, St. Jean-Clarke received a call from you saying that the mayor was removing her from the board. I understand that St. Jean-Clarke's term had expired, but it is my understanding that at least two other commissioners are also serving past their terms. My observation is that those commissioners have been less publicly vocal about DCHA leadership decision-making and generally sided with the Board Chair Neil Albert and Director Garrett. St. Jean-Clarke generally has not.

The other explanation for her removal, I am told, is that she is no longer eligible to serve in the seat designated for a Housing Choice Voucher recipient. That's because she is a DCHA success story; St. Jean-Clarke bought her home in Ward 8 through DCHA's homebuyer's program. In fact, earlier this year, St. Jean-Clarke wrote my office expressing her desire to continue to serve and be reappointed precisely because she believes in the mission of DCHA, and she wants to help the authority replicate her success.

Indeed, St. Jean-Clarke is exactly the kind of commissioner we want on the board. She understands the mission of the agency. She is a veteran who served her country in Afghanistan, came home suffering from PTSD, and was nearly evicted from the home where she was raising her son. St. Jean-Clarke turned her life around through a program operated by DCHA and So Others Might Eat, which gave her a voucher and stable housing. She then used DCHA's homeownership program to purchase a house with the help of her voucher.

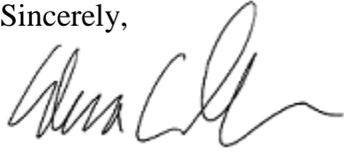
Please provide answers to the following questions:

- Under what authority was St. Jean-Clarke removed from her position on the DCHA board?
- When was the decision made to remove St. Jean-Clarke?
- Who made the decision to remove her?
- Why was she removed without a replacement?
- Is the commissioner occupying the seat designated for a Housing Choice Voucher recipient required to receive subsidies to stay in that seat? If so, please provide the relevant DC Code citation.
- When did the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointment first learn that St. Jean-Clarke was no longer eligible to hold the position on the board?
- Why was it decided to remove St. Jean-Clarke from the seat at that time, instead of waiting for a new commissioner to be appointed to fill that position?
- If St. Jean-Clarke was no longer eligible for the position and needed to be immediately removed, why was she not removed two years ago when she stopped receiving housing voucher payments?
- Why would an appointee who is past the end of their term be allowed to remain on a board, but an appointee like St. Jean-Clarke be removed immediately?
- Is the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments aware of any other appointees, on the DCHA board or any other board or commission, who are no longer eligible to serve in their positions, outside of being past the end of their appointed terms?
  - If so, please provide a list of these appointees.
- Please provide a list of any appointees removed from their seats over the last 12 months because they were ineligible to continue to serve.
- What steps is the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments taking to find and remove any other ineligible appointees on other boards?

I would appreciate a response to these answers by September 25, 2020.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Maya Brennan in my office at mbrennan@dccouncil.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elissa Silverman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Elissa Silverman  
Chair, Committee on Labor and Workforce Development  
Council of the District of Columbia