

May 1, 2023

Mr. Thomas N. Faust, Director
DC Department of Corrections
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Washington, DC 20009
Email: thomas.faust@dc.gov

Councilmembers of the District of Columbia
Council of the District of Columbia
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Washington, DC 20004

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Re: Access to DC Council Hearings

Dear Director Faust and Members of the Council,

In 2020 the District of Columbia took the critical step of expanding the vote to incarcerated District residents through the “Restore the Vote Amendment Act of 2020.” This law expands the right to vote in local and federal elections to District residents regardless of incarceration status—ending a racialized practice of denying the vote to incarcerated individuals that had its origins in Jim Crow laws. Since its enactment advocates, the DC Board of Elections, and the DC Department of Corrections (“DOC”) have collaborated to ensure that DC residents in DOC custody have not only the right to vote, but the ability to do so. We applaud the DC Department of Corrections for its ongoing efforts.

We write today to ask that the DC Department of Corrections and the DC Council take the next step to ensure that all DC residents can be full participants in our democracy. We ask that the DC Department of Corrections work with the DC Council to establish a procedure that will allow incarcerated District residents to be notified of, watch, and testify virtually at DC Council hearings. Since the start of the pandemic the DOC has utilized tablets and other technology to allow those held within its walls access to outside providers and educators. We hope this technology can be further expanded to allow incarcerated District residents direct access to and participation in their government. Consistent with local and federal law, we expect the process to be available and accessible to people with disabilities.

We look forward to working with you toward this goal and hope to hear back from you shortly.

Sincerely,



Stacey Litner

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
700 14th Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

A'sani Heartbeat
ACLU of the District of Columbia
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Color of Change
Columbus Community Legal Services
Community Family Life Services
Community Mediation DC
Council for Court Excellence
CURE-DC
DC Justice Lab
Disability Rights DC at University Legal
Services
Due Process Institute
Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop
Georgetown University Law Center
Harriet's Wildest Dreams
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Just Future Project
Justice Policy Institute
League of Women Voters of the District of
Columbia
More Than Our Crimes
Neighbors for Justice
Open City Advocates
ReThink Justice DC
Rising for Justice
School Justice Project
Second Look Project
Spanish Education for Women
The Festival Center
The Sentencing Project
Thrive Under 25
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

Who Speaks For Me?

Worth Rises

Queen Adesuyi, Ward 8 Resident
Casey Anderson
Sarah Baczewski, Ward 3 Resident
Leonard Bishop, ANC Commissioner 7F08
Fran Buntman, PhD
Lydia Burns, Ward 6 Resident
Joel Castón, Returning Citizen
Sig Cohen, Ward 6 Resident
Howard Crystal, Ward 6 Resident
Maxine Davis, Ward 4 Resident
Frankie Hargrove
Joel Heller, Ward 1 Resident
Emma Hersom
Seana Holland, Ward 4 Resident
Alison Horn, Ward 4 Resident
Anya Kreider, Ward 5 Resident
Lori Leibowitz, Ward 1 Resident
Jennifer P. Lyman, Ward 3 Resident
Sara Mosenkis, Ward 1 Resident
Khawla Nakua
Molly Prothero, Ward 6 Resident
Julia Saltzman, Ward 2 Resident
Pamela Sheppard
Alan Shusterman
Gail Sonnemann, Ward 3 Resident
Hannah Spiro, Rabbi of Hill Havurah
Tamecko Stephens
Sam Stringer, Ward 4 Resident
Tricia, Ward 1 Resident
Jennifer Ubiera, Ward 4 Resident

Cc: Eric Glover, General Counsel, DC Department of Corrections
Michael Porcello, Committee Director, Judiciary and Public Safety