

EXHIBIT D

DECLARATION OF KAHSSAY GHEBREBRHAN

I, Kahssay Ghebrebrhan, declare:

1. I am over the age of eighteen. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated herein, unless otherwise indicated below, and am competent to testify to them.
2. I am a 63 year-old Black man. I was born and raised in Ethiopia, but was forced to flee the country in 1975 to escape the Ethiopian Civil War. I fled to Sudan and later relocated to Germany for a time. I moved to the District of Columbia in 1990 and have lived here ever since. I am a resident of Ward 2.
3. I began street vending in D.C. in 1991. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I operated a hotdog stand on the block of 600 Indiana Avenue N.W. near the D.C. Superior Court and many other government buildings. I primarily sold hot dogs, as well as chips, soda, and candy.
4. From 1991-2020, I renewed my license every two years, and never encountered any problems with doing so.
5. While street vending, I operated my cart year-round, Monday to Friday. The hours were long—I often worked ten hours a day, especially in the summers when I had the most business. It was hard work, but I enjoyed owning my own business. With this job, I was able to make a steady income and support my family.
6. I stopped vending on March 17, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I did not feel safe operating my food cart during the pandemic. There was also no business as all of the government buildings were closed. I own my cart and continue to pay \$100 a month to store it a garage.
7. Because I was not vending due to the COVID-19 pandemic, my vending license expired on September 30, 2020. However, my vending license was not suspended—and the District continued charge me \$375 quarterly vending fees even after my license had expired. I understand that the only way to prevent those fees from being imposed is to surrender your vending license, which I did not do because I always intended to renew my vending license and resume vending.

8. Now that the COVID-19 emergency measures have been lifted, I desire to resume my work as a street vendor—including this summer, which is the busiest season. I tried to renew my license in 2021, but was not able to do so because the license desk was closed. To this end, I first tried to renew my license in September 2022 when it felt safer and people were returning to work at their office buildings. I went to the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. I was told that I needed a Clean Hands certificate in order to renew my license. When I requested this certificate, I learned that I owed approximately \$3,000 in outstanding taxes from 2018.

9. In October 2022, I went to the D.C. Office of Tax Revenue (OTR) to request documentation of my outstanding taxes. The OTR representative informed me that OTR had misapplied several of my 2018 quarterly street vending payments to the wrong quarters. As a result of these OTR errors, several of my timely payments were marked as outstanding and I was erroneously charged penalties and interest.

10. I was successfully able to have my 2018 taxes, penalties, and interest reduced and cleared.

11. However, I also learned that I owed outstanding taxes for the quarterly street vending fee from 2020. I do not know the exact amount, but believe that it must be at least a thousand dollars at this point. I was not offered a payment plan. Because of this outstanding debt, I cannot obtain a “Clean Hands” certificate and cannot resume my work as a street vendor.

12. Because I am unable to vend given my outstanding debt, I have not had full-time, regular work since March of 2020. I am the primary caregiver for my sick, elderly sister, who is unable to work. I initially supported myself and my sister with unemployment benefits, but those ended sometime in the fall of 2021. I am receiving food stamps and welfare benefits. Other than this, I have no other source of income. I am unable to work as a street vendor without a valid license.

13. I am willing to pay down any debts, but I do not have the ability to pay them without any income. How can I be asked to pay if I am unable to work?

14. I am eager to return to work. I have renewed my cart tag every year, at the cost of \$50, in order to maintain current tags so that I can resume work at any time. I also pay \$100 a month to store my cart in a garage.

15. I currently cannot afford to pay my debt to D.C.

16. If I could resume my job as a street vendor, I would be able to earn more income. I believe resuming vending would put me on the path towards economic success, supporting my family, and taking care of my financial obligations. If I cannot continue working as a street vendor due to the Clean Hands Law, I will continue to have financial difficulties, including with respect to meeting my financial obligations.

17. The summer is usually the busiest and most lucrative time for street vendors. It is when we get the most business—and I, in turn, earn the most money. I am incredibly eager to go back to work as a street vendor, but due to the Clean Hands Law, I cannot do so.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. I certify that I have reviewed this declaration in Amharic.

This Declaration was signed by me on June 14, 2023, in Washington, D.C.



Kahssay Ghebrebrhan