

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



April 16, 2024

Chairman Phil Mendelson
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on B23-0475, the Initiative Amendment Act. As you know, ANC 3A discussed the proposed legislation as one of the agenda items at our duly noticed regular public meeting on April 16. We read your introductory statement on the bill as well as your summary comments in your email, and had a good discussion among the Commissioners and other participants in the meeting. On behalf of the Commission, I am sharing the highlights of our discussion and our vote.

The Commission understands and is sympathetic to one of the proposed legislation's justifications: that a large number of initiatives with major budgetary implications, if allowed for consideration by containing the phrase "subject to appropriations" in their text, could burden the Council during an already challenging and abbreviated annual budget process. However, forcing all initiatives to be cost-free would mean that there would likely be almost no initiatives that could be placed on the ballot. The Commissioners agreed that denying the right to consider almost any initiative would undermine the Home Rule Charter, and it would be harmful to create such a restriction before seeing the consequences of the Board of Elections new interpretation of existing law. We heard comments from constituents that the proposed legislation appeared designed to cut off the initiative system as a means for citizen participation in local government and aims to stifle representation of their views. The Commission agrees that, if passed, the proposed legislation stands to create many more cynical citizens.

The Commission's clear conclusion by a unanimous vote was that we could not support the proposed legislation.

The Commission voted 4-0 to approve sending this letter at our duly-noticed public meeting on April 16, 2024, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis
Chair

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (January 1, 2023-December 31, 2024) www.anc3a.org

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Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis

Judy Havemann

Hans Miller

Jeremy Del Moral

Ann Lane Mladinov