

May 1, 2023

Mr. Thomas N. Faust, Director  
DC Department of Corrections  
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Washington, DC 20009  
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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

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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