

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

DRAFT

---

**TO:** All Councilmembers

**FROM:** Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Committee of the Whole

**DATE:** November 17, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Report on PR 21-361, the “Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015”

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 21-361, the “Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015” was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council.

CONTENTS

I.	Background And Need.....	1
II.	Legislative Chronology.....	2
III.	Position Of The Executive.....	3
IV.	Comments Of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions .....	3
V.	Summary Of Testimony.....	3
VI.	Impact On Existing Law .....	4
VII.	Fiscal Impact.....	4
VIII.	Section-By-Section Analysis .....	4
IX.	Committee Action.....	5
X.	Attachments .....	5

**I. BACKGROUND AND NEED**

Proposed Resolution 21-361, the “Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015,” was introduced by Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor on October 5, 2015 and referred to the Committee of the Whole. The purpose of PR 21-361 is to confirm the Mayor’s nomination of Christina M. Respress for appointment as a member of the District’s Interagency Council on Homelessness as a representative from an organization that provides services within the Continuum of Care.

The Interagency Council on Homelessness (“ICH”) was established by the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 “for the purpose of facilitating interagency, cabinet-level leadership in planning, policymaking, program development, provider monitoring, and budgeting for the

Continuum of Care of homeless services.”<sup>1</sup> In addition to agency heads from relevant District agencies, members of the ICH include representatives of organizations that provide services within the Continuum of Care, homeless or formerly homeless individuals, and advocates for the District’s homeless population, among others.<sup>2</sup> Annually, the ICH develops and publishes the District’s “Winter Plan” detailing how and where the District will provide hypothermia shelter for individuals and families.<sup>3</sup> In March 2015, the ICH published its 5-year “strategic plan,” *Homeward DC*, which describes the District’s plan to end chronic homelessness in the District by 2020.<sup>4</sup> Going forward, members will work to ensure the plan’s implementation and execution.

Ms. Respress is currently a Maryland resident and the Executive Director of Pathways to Housing DC, a District-based service provider. She is a graduate of Howard University, where she earned a Master of Social Work. Ms. Respress also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the Catholic University of America. Throughout her career, Ms. Respress has served in various roles at organizations serving individuals with mental illness and experiencing homelessness. Ms. Respress has demonstrated her commitment to excellence in serving individuals with mental health and housing needs. This experience should equip her to contribute successfully to the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

The Committee of the Whole recommends her appointment.

## II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| October 5, 2015  | PR 21-361, the “Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015” is introduced by Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor.   |
| October 6, 2015  | PR 21-361 is “read” at the October 6, 2015 Legislative Meeting; on this date the referral of the PR to the Committee of the Whole is official and the 60-day period for Council review begins. If this measure is not acted upon by the Council before December 6, 2015, PR 21-361 will be deemed approved. |
| October 9, 2015  | Notice of Intent to Act on PR 21-361 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> .   |
| October 23, 2015 | Notice of a Public Hearing on PR 21-361 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> .  |
| November 4, 2015 | The Committee of the Whole holds a roundtable on PR 21-361 through PR 21-372, which is recessed until November 10, 2015 to hear testimony on PR 21-370.   |

---

<sup>1</sup> D.C. Law 16-35, Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 (eff. Oct. 22, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See *id.*

<sup>3</sup> See *id.*

<sup>4</sup> See *Homeward DC*, available at: [http://ich.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ich/page\\_content/attachments/ICH-StratPlan2.7-Web.pdf](http://ich.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ich/page_content/attachments/ICH-StratPlan2.7-Web.pdf).

November 10, 2015 The Committee of the Whole reconvenes the public hearing on PR 21-361 through PR 21-372.

November 17, 2015 The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 21-361.

### III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ms. Respress is the Mayor's nominee for appointment as a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

### IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission.

### V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public roundtable on PR 21-361 through PR 21-372 on Wednesday, November 4, 2015, but the roundtable was recessed due to a conflict for Ms. Margaret Hacskaylo, nominated under PR 21-370. The roundtable was reconvened on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 where testimony from Ms. Hacskaylo was received. The testimony summarized below is from both November 4<sup>th</sup> and November 10<sup>th</sup> reconvened roundtable. Copies of written testimony are attached to this report.

*Christina M. Respress, Nominee*, summarized her background and discussed her past experience with and commitment to ending homelessness in the District of Columbia. Ms. Respress highlighted her 18 years of work in this area and noted her organization's long focus on a Housing First model of service provisions. She discussed her understanding of what is necessary to end homelessness utilizing both her service and systems-level perspectives. In addition, Ms. Respress indicated that her current involvement with various ICH working groups and committees has prepared her to participate constructively as a voting member.

*Elizabeth Schroeder Stribling, Nominee*, summarized her background qualifications for reappointment to the ICH.

*Michael L. Ferrell, Nominee*, summarized his background and qualifications for reappointment to the ICH.

*Deborah Shore, Nominee*, summarized her background qualifications for reappointment to the ICH.

*Adam Rocap, Nominee*, summarized his background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Nechama Masliansky, Nominee*, summarized her background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Eric J. Sheptock, Nominee*, summarized his background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Donald L. Brooks, Nominee*, summarized his background and qualifications for reappointment to the ICH.

*Albert Townsend, Nominee*, summarized his background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Margaret A. HacsKaylo, Nominee*, summarized her background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Margaret Riden, Nominee*, summarized her background and qualifications for reappointment to the ICH.

*Jill Carmichael, Nominee*, summarized her background and qualifications for appointment to the ICH.

*Adam Maier, Housing Director, Pathways to Housing DC*, testified that that each of the 12 nominees possesses knowledge and experience in the areas of homeless services policy and service delivery. Mr. Maier recommends approval of all nominees.

The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to PR 21-361.

## VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Members of the Interagency Council on Homelessness are appointed pursuant to section 4 of the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005, effective October 22, 2005 (D.C. Law 16-35; D.C. Official Code § 4-751.01 *et seq.*), which established the ICH.

## VII. FISCAL IMPACT

The approval of PR 21-361 will have no fiscal impact. Members are not compensated by the District government and the operations of the Interagency Council on Homelessness are funded through the office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

## VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 States the short title of PR 21-361.

- Section 2 Confirms the appointment of Christina M. Respress.
- Section 3 Directs the Council to transmit a copy of this resolution to the nominee and the Office of the Mayor.
- Section 4 Provides that PR 21-361 shall take effect immediately upon publication in the *DC Register*.

## IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

## X. ATTACHMENTS

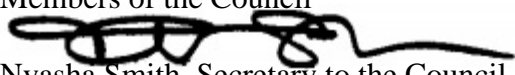
1. PR 21-361 as introduced.
2. Nominee's responses to Committee pre-hearing questions.
3. Written Testimony.
4. Legal Sufficiency Determination for PR 21-361.
5. Committee Print for PR 21-361.

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.**  
**Washington D.C. 20004**

Memorandum

---

To : Members of the Council

From :   
Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : October 06, 2015

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Monday, October 5, 2015. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015", PR21-0361

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole. This resolution will be deemed approved on Sunday, December 6, 2015 without Council action.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel  
Budget Director  
Legislative Services



Chairman Phil Mendelson  
at the request of the Mayor

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Chairman Phil Mendelson, at the request of the Mayor, introduced the following resolution,  
which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

To confirm the appointment of Christina M. Respress to the Interagency Council on  
Homelessness.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this  
resolution may be cited as the "Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress  
Confirmation Resolution of 2015".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the appointment of:

Christina M. Respress  
7109 44<sup>th</sup> Place  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

as a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness as a representative from an  
organization that provides services within the Continuum of Care, pursuant to section 4(a) of the  
Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005, effective October 22, 2005 (D.C. Law 16-35; D.C.  
Official Code § 4-752.01) (2015 Supp.), replacing Hannah Hawkins, and to serve for a term to  
end June 12, 2017.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,  
upon its adoption, to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

# Pathways to Housing DC

November 2, 2015

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Michael Allen, Esq.,**  
*Chair*  
**Nan Roman, Secretary**  
**Amber Smith**  
**Ivory Smith**  
**Ed Rich, Esq.**

Committee of the Whole  
Council of the District of Columbia  
Attn: Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Suite 410  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Christina Respress: Interagency on Homelessness Confirmation by the Committee of the Whole

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

My name is Christina Respress and I am the Executive Director of Pathways to Housing DC. I am honored to be nominated for appointment to serve as a member of the District's Interagency Council on Homelessness. Below are my responses to the Council's questions to nominees.

1. Financial Disclosure Statement not filed. See answers 2-8 below in lieu of that statement.
2. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.

*Answer: None*

3. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.

*Answer: None*

4. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.

*Answer: None*

5. Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000.



# Pathways to Housing DC

*Answer: None*

6. Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.

*Answer: None*

7. Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.

*Answer: None*

8. Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.

*Answer: None*

9. Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member, and include the term of service for each.

*Answer: None*

10. Please list any other boards (e.g., Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.

*Answer: Currently serve as Secretary on the D.C. Behavioral Health Association Board of Directors.*

11. Do you have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested?

*Answer: No*

12. Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in the performance of your duties as a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness?

*Answer: No*

13. What do you believe is the purpose of the Interagency Council on Homelessness and the role of its members, and why have you agreed to serve?

*Answer: I understand that the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) is the result of the 2005 Homeless Services Reform ACT (HSRA). The purpose of the ICH is to bring together stakeholders from across government, nonprofit, and all sectors of the community to create*

# Pathways to Housing DC

*policies and programs to end homelessness in DC, identify resources needed for the job, and to create the oversight needed to ensure we are accountable to our stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the plan. I have agreed to serve on the ICH in order to help bridge the gap that is often created when policy and program decisions are made by government level officials without the input from the people affected and/or the providers who will implement these programs. I have also agreed to serve because our community has truly come together to create a visionary plan to end homelessness and I am committed to ensuring its success. I will continue to identify real and potential barriers that stand in the way of achieving the ICH Strategic Plan, and suggest solutions to overcome these barriers.*

14. Please discuss any past and present experience not already mentioned that you believe is relevant to support your appointment as a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

*Answer: See attached testimony*

15. As a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, what will be your top five priorities?

*Answer:*

- I. Ensuring the success of the ICH's strategic plan, Homeward DC*
- II. Ending Veteran homelessness by 2015. Beyond 2015: ensuring that the systems are in place so that no veteran in the future becomes chronically homeless; that adequate resources exist to prevent veterans from becoming homeless; and that any veteran that becomes homeless returns to housing within 60 days.*
- III. Ending chronic homelessness by 2017. To achieve this goal, my priorities will include making sure the Coordinated Entry System is fully functioning and that Housing First is implemented across our HUD continuum of care.*
- IV. Better engaging our business, private, and foundation partners in achieving the goals of the ICH.*
- V. Create innovative housing and support solutions to work with the 10-15% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness whose needs are not being successfully in our existing Housing First programs.*

Sincerely,

Christy Respress, MSW  
Executive Director  
Pathways to Housing DC





**Testimony of Christina Respress  
Executive Director, Pathways to Housing DC  
To the Committee of the Whole, on  
PR 21-361, "Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M. Respress Confirmation  
Resolution of 2015"**

**November 4, 2015**

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Council. My name is Christy Respress and I am the Executive Director of Pathways to Housing DC. On behalf of the 2,000 people we serve each year and our 100 employees, I thank the Mayor and you for considering my nomination for membership on the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness. I am truly honored and humbled.

For the past 18 years I have dedicated myself to the work of ending homelessness. I have spent the last 11 years working at Pathways to Housing DC where our mission is to end homelessness and support recovery for individuals living with serious mental illness, addictions, and other complex health challenges. We opened our doors in 2004 with the goal of bringing the Housing First model to the District where it was so desperately needed. While many agencies were offering high quality mental health and housing services, some of our most vulnerable neighbors were often unable to access them because they weren't engaged in psychiatric or addictions treatment while living on the street. Pathways to Housing DC has ended homelessness for over 600 people using the Housing First model of providing permanent housing and the wraparound support services people need to be successful in their homes and in the community. And they are successful. 9 out of 10 people remain in housing and on the path to a life filled with meaning and hope. Pathways to Housing DC does not do this work alone. Our success is in our innovation and our partnerships. We provide direct street outreach to over 1,000 individuals each year through our Homeless Outreach contracts with the DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) and the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District. Our agency is certified by the DC Department of Behavioral Health and we provide mental health and addictions services in the DBH funded Urgent Care Clinic in the DC Superior Court. We have been a contractor with DHS's Permanent Supportive Housing Program since 2008, and we successfully piloted the Veteran Administration's first Housing First program. Additionally, Pathways to Housing DC directly manages federal HUD housing resources and Local Rent Supplement (LRSP) resources to end homelessness for District residents.

I started my career in homeless services in Washington, DC after obtaining my undergraduate degree in social work from Catholic University. Where I found my passion was in my work as a



## Pathways to Housing DC

Street Outreach Specialist with Healthcare for the Homeless, now called Unity Health Care. There I spent my days and evenings walking in the streets, alleys, and parks asking people how I could help. Most often the answer was housing. For the majority of the people I was working with, this seemed impossible because the housing programs all required people to be clean and sober or engaged in psychiatric treatment before they got the housing. After two years of doing street outreach I returned to school seeking answers. While receiving my Masters in Social Work from Howard University I found an article on this radical new approach called Housing First that was taking place in New York City. I moved there and began working for Pathways to Housing- first in direct service on an Assertive Community Treatment Team and then as the Clinical Director managing multiple Housing First programs. In 2004, the District reached out to Pathways to Housing to replicate its successful model here. I agreed to help get the program started and have remained with the agency ever since because I am inspired each day by the people we serve and the passion and dedication of our staff.

I believe that one of my greatest contributions to the ICH will be in my understanding of the work required to end homelessness from the front lines, as well as from a systems level. I have been increasingly involved in ICH activities, including frequent participation in multiple working groups such as the Outreach Committee, the Housing Solutions Committee, the Medicaid Workgroup, and the Strategic Planning Committee. I am also an active member of the 25 Cities Leadership Team and our agency is heavily involved in Coordinated Entry systems work.

I am hoping to join the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness to better use my expertise, and that of the Pathways to Housing DC staff and clients I represent, to create the solutions and implement Homeward DC's plan to end homelessness in our community. I also want to hold our community accountable to the people we serve who are experiencing homelessness and ensure that we follow through with our plans. I am grateful for the work of the ICH in its first decade and am inspired by what is currently happening in its second decade under the leadership of its Executive Director, Kristy Greenwalt.

Washington, DC can- and will- end homelessness in the nation's capital. That is something I only dreamed of saying twenty years ago when I began my career. We have the political will, the technology, and the community commitment. In the last two years I have seen government, community stakeholders, and nonprofit leaders come together with a shared vision and renewed energy to work on this issue. I hope to represent Pathways to Housing DC and the people we serve on the ICH as we realize our shared vision.

Thank you for again for considering my nomination to the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.

1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**  
2 Committee of the Whole  
3 November 17, 2015  
4  
5  
6

7  
8 **A PROPOSED RESOLUTION**  
9

10 21-361  
11

12 **IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
13  
14 \_\_\_\_\_  
15

16  
17 To confirm the Mayoral appointment of Ms. Christina Respress to the Interagency  
18 Council on Homelessness.  
19

20 **RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That**  
21 this resolution may be cited as the “Interagency Council on Homelessness Christina M.  
22 Respress Confirmation Resolution of 2015”.

23 **Sec. 2.** The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the appointment of:

24 Ms. Christina M. Respress  
25 7109 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
26 Takoma Park, MD 20912  
27  
28

29 as a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness as a representative from an  
30 organization that provides services within the Continuum of Care, pursuant to section 4  
31 of the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005, effective October 22, 2005 (D.C. Law 16-  
32 35; D.C. Official Code § 4-752.01) (2015 Supp.), replacing Hannah Hawkins, and to  
33 serve for a term to end June 12, 2017.

34 **Sec. 3.** The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this  
35 resolution, upon its adoption, to the appointee and the Office of the Mayor.

36 **Sec. 4.** This resolution shall take effect immediately.