



chairman's update

the NEWSLETTER of
DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson

1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 724-8032

AUDIT REVEALS DISTRICT'S STRONG FISCAL HEALTH

Earlier this month the District released its Comprehensive Annual Report (CAFR). For the 19th consecutive year, it shows a clean audit. This unprecedented run of clean audits not only reflects the District's continuing financial health, but also the dedication to maintaining fiscal discipline.

For the first time in decades, there are no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in DC's internal financial controls. This is remarkable. Working to eliminate deficiencies identified in previous audits and ensuring, through widespread improvement of internal controls, no new deficiencies, is a substantial accomplishment for the District.

Further good news for the District's financial health is that the city has fully funded its pension and retirement benefits, unlike many jurisdictions. The District is a leader in the nation for a fiscally sound pension system.

The CAFR revealed that the District ended last year with a \$293 million surplus. While I am concerned that much of the surplus came as a result of underspending—meaning some priority programs may have been shortchanged—the overall picture of financial health is great news.

Note that the existence of a surplus does not mean there is cash on the table. Most of the surplus has actually been spent: the Mayor and Council decided last year to carry \$268 million from Fiscal Year 2015 into the current fiscal year.

Finally, the Council should continue to push for sufficient reserve funds (our rainy day reserves currently have approximately 49 days of operating expenses, just short of the 60 days considered to be best practice). Residents should feel good that the District's finances are indeed healthy.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES CORNER

While searching the Ward 7 Listerv the Constituent Services team came across a resident who had concerns about a car that had crashed into the woods and had yet to be removed, nearly two weeks after the incident. The constituent said he reached out to several DC government agencies but was unable to make any progress on the removal of the car. Chairman Mendelson's team then took it upon themselves to reach out to the concerned resident about the location. The Constituent Services Specialist went out to outbound Branch Avenue and Park Road in Southeast DC to take pictures of the wrecked vehicle (*pictured below*).



She then contacted the National Park Service to see whose jurisdiction the property fell under. They were able to coordinate with the DC Department of Transportation and determine who was responsible for that area. The next day, the reporting constituent emailed the Chairman's team to let them know the car had finally been removed. To avoid getting caught in the woods of District government, contact Chairman Mendelson.



ChairmanPhilMendelson



ChmnMendelson

Contact the
Constituent Services Team
At (202) 724-8158

chairman's update

IMPROVING THE DISTRICT'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT THROUGH WORKER-FRIENDLY LEGISLATION

Last October, legislation was introduced to establish a "universal paid leave system" for District residents and employees (Bill 21-0415). As introduced, the bill would provide the most generous paid leave benefits in the United States: up to 16 weeks. There is a consensus that paid leave is beneficial to employees. But legitimate concerns have been expressed over the potential impact of this legislation on District businesses.

My approach to this measure, which is currently pending in my Committee, is to re-craft the proposal to not just benefit workers but make the District attractive to businesses. Benefits, at the right level, attract and retain workers, and reduce costly turnover.

I have been meeting and working with stakeholders and advocacy groups address concerns and meet this goal. I have held three hearings. The first hearing centered on testimony from various individuals representing the District's business community, as well as advocates for the bill. The second hearing was limited to testimony from experts and government witnesses. A third hearing provided a general forum with 108 public witnesses.

All of this has helped Committee staff focus on what concerns need to be addressed and what areas of the bill should be modified. My goal is to move a worker-friendly bill that is good for business. While worker-friendly provisions obviously have a positive impact on workers, it does not necessarily follow that a pro-worker measure is bad for business. In fact, the provisions being considered make the District more attractive to good applicants, giving businesses a choice of good hires. We have an opportunity to look at this measure through the lens of increasing the District's attractiveness to employers, and doing so in a way that makes us more competitive regionally.

If you would like to follow the progress of this bill, you may do so online at ChairmanMendelson.com/cow/upla/

www.ChairmanMendelson.com

Upcoming Hearings of the Committee of the Whole

Legislative Meeting

March 1, 2016,
10am in Council Chamber Room 500

Agency Performance Oversight Hearing *(Ofc. of Zoning, Ofc. of Planning, Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development)*

March 2, 2016
9:30am, Room 412

Agency Performance Oversight Hearing *(Interagency Council on Homelessness, UDC, Dept. of Human Resources, Labor Relations, Employee Appeals, Public Employee Relations Board)*

March 3, 2016
9:30am in Council Chamber Rm 500

Agency Performance Oversight Hearing *(Exec. Ofc. Of the Mayor, City Administrator, Secretary of DC, Contract Appeals Board, Contracting & Procurement, Chief Technology Officer)*

March 7, 2016
10am in Council Chamber Rm 500

Agency Performance Oversight Hearing *(MWAA, MWCOG, DC Auditor, Statehood Commission, Budget & Planning, DC Retirement Board, Retiree Health Contribution)*

March 8, 2016
10am in Council Chamber Rm 412

Regular Meeting (Markup)

March 15, 2016
10am in Council Chamber Room 500

Hearing on B21-620, Homeward DC Omnibus Facilities Approval

March 17, 2016
10:30am in Council Chamber Room 500

To sign up to testify, or for more information, contact the Committee at (202) 724-8196