



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN MENDELSON
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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**CHAIRMAN MENDELSON OPENING STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED FY 2020 BUDGET**

WASHINGTON, DC -- DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson released the following statement regarding today's hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Budget:

"The resources available to the Mayor for her FY 2020 budget proposal are considerable. Local fund revenues have surpassed \$8 billion due - in part - to over \$100 million in tax increases.

While I believe it is important for Mayor Bowser to be here and to formally present her budget to the Council at a public hearing, and I equally believe it is important for members to be respectful to the Mayor, who is the leader of the executive branch, I cannot help but be critical of this proposed FY 2020 budget.

While many people are celebrating the dramatically increased investment in affordable housing – a 30% increase to the Housing Production Trust Fund alone – there is very little, too little, scraps, relatively speaking, added for public education. And yet public education, more than anything else, is the true pathway to the middle class.

And the proposed budget boosts housing subsidies by raising taxes. Raising taxes in an environment where our revenues are growing by hundreds of millions of dollars annually anyway. When Mayor Bowser came to office in Fiscal Year 2015, our total general operating funds were budgeted at \$7,690,462,000. [last line, page G4, FY 2015 budget]

The total general operating fund budget from Mayor Bowser for FY 2020 is \$9,874,669,000. This is a \$2.2 billion dollar increase. In four years. So, we are raising taxes?

Meanwhile virtually none of the Council's legislation that became law – and therefore government policy – under the Mayor's watch is funded in this budget. Like Language Access, or School Discipline, or Birth-to-Three.

And then there are smaller matters. Like the Office of Unified Communications, which handles emergency 911 calls, that is crying for better technology. Actually, the technology fund was raided last year and converted to operating, so there is no longer a dedicated source to maintain state-of-the-art technology for our emergency response system.

But the most important oversight is education. Yes, I am disappointed with this budget.

The Council will be reviewing the proposed budget over the next 54 days with an eye toward more effective utilization of District resources."