

**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 : March 26, 2019

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Monday, March 25, 2019. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Wells Middle School Designation Act of 2019", B23-0216

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel  
Budget Director  
Legislative Services



OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY

2019 MAR 25 AM 11:23

MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

MAR 25 2019

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Suite 504  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

Pursuant to the Public Space Naming Amendment Act of 2016 (D.C. Law 21-161; D.C. Official Code §9-204.01), the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is requesting the DC Council officially designate a school in Square 3269 bounded by Sheridan Street N.W., 5th Street N.W., 3rd Street N.W., and Van Buren Street N.W. in Ward 4, as Ida B. Wells Middle School, to honor Ida B. Wells, an iconic investigative journalist, feminist, civil rights activist, educator, and researcher.

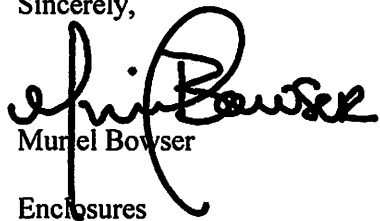
Born into slavery in 1862, Ida B. Wells was a tireless advocate for the underserved and brought injustices against African Americans to light, despite considerable opposition. She started her career in the classroom. At the age of sixteen, Wells became a teacher to support her family when both of her parents and younger brother died as a result of a yellow fever outbreak. While working as a teacher in Memphis, she began writing a column for *The Living Way*, a weekly newspaper, under the pen name "Iola." Her writings on racial injustices for the newspaper earned her a national reputation and she eventually became editor and co-owner of the *Free Speech and Headlight*.

Wells began her career as an investigative journalist after three of her friends were lynched by an angry white mob. She began documenting and compiling statistics on the widespread practice of lynching in the United States. Her investigation found that black men and women were frequently lynched for failing to pay debts, for perceived disrespect of white people, competing with white people economically, and at times for consensual relationships with white people. Her writing and activism quickly made her the foremost leader in the crusade against lynching. She was a radical activist at time when being both radical and a woman was unheard of in our country.

Today, on the 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her passing and during Women's History Month, it is my honor to request this designation. Wells Middle School will be D.C. Public Schools' only current standalone middle school named after an African-American woman. Naming this school after a woman as fearless as Ida B. Wells is an important milestone for our city and DCPS, and one that reflects our values of courage, equity, and excellence. The proposed name was chosen after a several month-long community engagement process DCPS undertook to engage the community and select a name. I urge the Council to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

As always, I am available to discuss any questions you may have regarding this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Muriel Bowser

Enclosures



Chairman Phil Mendelson  
at the request of the Mayor

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

To officially designate a new middle school in Square 3269, bounded by Sheridan Street N.W., 5<sup>th</sup> Street N.W., 3<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W., and Van Buren Street N.W. in Ward 4, as Wells Middle School, to honor Ida B. Wells, an iconic investigative journalist, civil rights activist, educator, and researcher. There are no proposed changes to the name of Calvin Coolidge High School, which occupies the same square and lot.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Wells Middle School Designation Act of 2019”.

Sec. 2. Pursuant to sections 401 and 422 of the Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code §§ 9-204.01 and 9-204.22) (“Act”), the Council officially designates the middle school in Square 3269, bounded by Sheridan Street N.W., 5<sup>th</sup> Street N.W., 3<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W., and Van Buren Street N.W. in Ward 4, as the Ida B. Wells Middle School.

Sec. 3. Transmittal.

The Council shall transmit a copy of this act, upon its effective date, to the Mayor, the District of Columbia Public Schools, and the Office of the Surveyor.

Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.

36           The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal  
37 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,  
38 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

39           Sec. 5. Effective date.

40           This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the  
41 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as  
42 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December  
43 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of  
44 Columbia Register.