

**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: December 17, 2019

SUBJECT: Report on Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019”

The Committee of the Whole, to which Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019” was referred, reports favorably thereon, with amendments, and recommends approval by the Council.

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I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019,” was introduced by Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie on June 4, 2019, and co-sponsored by Councilmembers Allen, Bonds, Cheh, Evans, Gray, Grosso, Nadeau, Silverman, Todd, R. White, T. White, and Chairman Mendelson. Bill 23-317 would designate Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia and would require the a plan for archiving and promotion of Go-Go music by the District.

Go-Go is a genre of music that came about in the early 1970s in Washington. The sound is inspired by funk, blues, soul, and salsa. The District’s own Chuck Brown, leader of a go-go band called the Soul Searchers, is regarded as the godfather of go-go. However, in the early days, “go-go” referred to the dance balls as much as it did the music.¹ Live bands were highly popular in the District throughout the 1960s and 1970s to where go-go can trace its roots. Chuck Brown’s concerts were marathons – they didn’t stop for hours. It was because of this style that Brown began developing a new beat to keep the audience dancing between songs, similar to

¹ KIP LONELL, CHARLES C. STEPHENSON, THE BEAT! GO-GO MUSIC FROM WASHINGTON, PART 3 (2009) at 76.

recorded DJ music.² As the discos waned, they gave way to go-go venues including the Panorama Room, Masonic Temple, Coliseum, Howard Theater, and RSVP to name a few.³

Unfortunately, in the late 1980s, a series of incidents around some go-go halls tied the culture violence after some shootings and stabbings at the halls in the Fall of 1987. In response, the Council adopted legislation⁴ barring minors from the halls after 11:30 p.m. on most nights.⁵ That legislation was opposed by a string of teen-age witnesses, club operators, and the American Civil Liberties Union as a violation of minors' constitutional right of free assembly.⁶ In 2004, there was a push in neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland to curb go-go clubs⁷ and in 2011 the County instituted strict regulations on go-go venues, claiming they were a magnet for violence on go-go venues.⁸ Those regulations resulted in a lawsuit.⁹

The issue of go-go culture in a gentrifying District of Columbia came to a head in Pril 2019 when the go-go music went silent at a Metro PCS electronics in the Shaw neighborhood at the corner of Seventh Street and Florida Avenue, NW. That store had been known for pumping go-go music onto the streets during the day since 1995. After a complaint to T-Mobile (Metro PCS's parent company) from a resident of a new luxury mixed-use development, the music was turned down on the street, and then eventually the speakers were moved inside.¹⁰ That resulted in days of protests and town hall meetings to address growing feeling that native D.C. culture was being eroded.¹¹ The next day, the CEO of T-Mobile, John Legere, released a statement saying that "the music should NOT stop in D.C." and that the "music will go on and our dealer will work with the neighbors to compromise volume."¹² Since then, the #DontMuteDC movement has expanded in the city to change the way the District treats its native sound.¹³ That movement has also resulted in this legislation, the "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019."

This bill comes on the heels of a growing recognition in the District over the last decade of the importance of go-go music in the District's culture. In 2009, the Council adopted

² KIP LONELL, CHARLES C. STEPHENSON, *THE BEAT! GO-GO MUSIC FROM WASHINGTON, PART 3 (XXXX)* at 76.

³ William Reynolds and James K. Zimmerman, *Go-go, the funky, percussive music invented in Washington, D.C.*, SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY (June 9, 2015) <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/go-go-washington-dc>.

⁴ D.C. Law 7-88, "District of Columbia Public Hall Regulation Amendment Act of 1987, D.C. OFFICIAL CODE § 47-2820(c)-(d), (eff. March 11, 1988).

⁵ Lawrence Feinberg, D.C. Council Approves Youth Curfew for Go-Go Dance Clubs, WASHINGTON POST, December 9, 1987.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Perry Bacon, Jr., *Pr. George's Wants to See Some Go-Gos Gone*, WASHINGTON POST, August 3, 2002 at B5.

⁸ Wesley Robinson, *Prince George's County businessmen cry foul on council's dance-hall policy*, WASHINGTON POST, August 21, 2014.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Rachel Kurzius, *Shaw's Metro PCS Store Has Been Forced To Turn Off Its Go-Go Music, Owner Says*, DCIST (April 8, 2019 11:53 AM), <https://dcist.com/story/19/04/08/shaws-metro-pcs-store-has-been-forced-to-turn-off-its-go-go-music-owner-says/>.

¹¹ Marissa J. Lang, *'Where's my go-go music?' Residents say turn up the funk after a complaint silenced a D.C. intersection*, WASHINGTON POST, April 9, 2019.

¹² Marissa J. Lang, *'The music will go on': Go-go returns days after a complaint silenced a D.C. store*, WASHINGTON POST, April 10, 2019.

¹³ Marissa J. Lang, *'Go-go, once blamed for D.C.'s social ills, gains momentum to become the official music of the District*, WASHINGTON POST, November 1, 2019.

legislation to symbolically designate 7th Street between T Street and Florida Avenue, N.W. as “Chuck Brown Way.”¹⁴ In 2012, the Council adopted legislation designating the western side of Langdon Park between 18th and 20th Streets N.E. as “Chuck Brown Park.”¹⁵ In 2014, the Council authorized a Chuck Brown commemorative work in the park.¹⁶ Chuck Brown has also had a string of ceremonial resolutions and mayoral proclamations recognizing his role in the founding of go-go music and his indelible mark on local culture. In 2016, the Council symbolically designated the 2300 block of 4th Street, N.E., in Ward 5 as “Maverick Room Way”¹⁷ in recognition of the Maverick Room club that once sat on that block – an historic go-go club that Chuck Brown described as the place where many traditions of go-go music were developed.

The committee print for Bill 23-317 largely reflects the bill as introduced. First, it designates go-go music as the official music of the District. Second, it would require the Mayor to create a plan to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history. The introduced version of the bill would have required a new program to begin the preservation and marketing of go-go music and history, however the executive testified that would result in a fiscal impact as the Office of Cable Television, Film, Television, Music, and Entertainment (OCFTME) would need resources and staff to implement that provision. Instead, the Committee recommends that Mayor submit a plan to the Council that looks not only at OCFTME, but at the District’s various other agencies that could have a role including the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the Archives, and the D.C. Public Library system. Such a plan would be comprehensive, and the Council could examine the funding needs during the budget process. Finally, the committee print adds a new section to the bill to repeal the 1987 prohibition on minors attending balls and dances after 11:30 P.M. That provision was targeted at go-go venues but has been superseded by broad-based juvenile curfew laws that are not venue-specific that went into place in 1995.¹⁸

Due to the rich history of Go-Go music, it is appropriate that it be designated as the official music of the District of Columbia. The Committee of the Whole recommends the approval of Bill 23-317 the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019” as amended in the committee print.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

June 4, 2019 Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019” is introduced by Councilmember McDuffie and co-sponsored by Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers Nadeau, Bonds, Evans, Cheh, Silverman, Allen, Grosso, Todd, R. White, T. White, and Gray and is referred to the Committee of the Whole.

¹⁴ D.C. Law 17-329, Duke Ellington Way, Chuck Brown Way, and Cathy Hughes Way at the Howard Theater Designation Act of 2008 (eff. March 21, 2009).

¹⁵ D.C. Law 19-259, Chuck Brown Park Designation Act of 2012 (eff. April 20, 2013).

¹⁶ D.C. Act 20-414, Chuck Brown Memorial Commemorative Work Emergency Act of 2014 (enacted August 15, 2014).

¹⁷ D.C. Law 21-114, Maverick Room Way Designation Act of 2015 (eff. May 12, 2016).

¹⁸ D.C. Law 11-48, Juvenile Curfew Act of 1995, D.C. OFFICIAL CODE § 2-1541 *et seq.* (eff. September 23, 1995).

June 14, 2019 Notice of Intent to Act on Bill 23-317 is published in the *Register*.

October 11, 2019 Notice of a Public Hearing on Bill 23-317 is published in the *Register*.

October 30, 2019 A Public Hearing is held on Bill 23-317 by the Committee of the Whole.

December 17, 2019 The Committee of the Whole marks up Bill 23-317.

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Angie Gates, Director, Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment, testified on behalf of the Executive in support of Bill 23-317 and stated that if her office were to implement a program of preservation and marketing that additional resources would be necessary..

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on Bill 23-317.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a Public Hearing on Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019” on November 26, 2019. The testimony summarized below is from that hearing. Copies of the testimony are attached to this report.

Ron Moten, #DONTMUTEDC, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the profound impact of Go-Go on his life and its importance to so many other Washingtonians.

Michelle Blackwell, Michelle Blackwell Experience, testified in support of Bill 23-317. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to give Go-Go music the culture the recognition that it deserves.

Anwan Glover (Big G), Founder and Lead of Backyard Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He recounted his growing up with Go-Go music and the importance to the District.

Chertia “Cookie” Whiting, Manager of Sirius Company, testified in support of Bill 23-317. She explained out adoption of this legislation would legitimize and put a stamp of approval showing that Go-Go is officially DC.

Natalie Hopkinson, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. She discussed the history of discouraging Go-Go music in the District and the need to legitimize its status by the Council.

Keith Robinson, Original Member and Congo Player, Backyard Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He talked about how fell in love with Go-Go music and how he became a Go-Go performer.

Marcus R. Johnson, Sr., Keyboardist, Backyard Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the growing impact of Go-Go music on younger generations and the need to continue to the tradition.

Cam Poles, Manager, Black Alley Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He testified to the need to preserve all aspects of culture in DC, and the special place that Go-Go music has in the District's culture.

Bo Miller, TCB Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the need to expand opportunities to access Go-Go and the positive impact that Go-Go can have on helping improve communities.

Ernest Price ("Tone P"), District Funk Records, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He addressed the popularity of Go-Go music with many bands playing nightly, exposing thousands of fans to the District's local music.

Tony Lewis, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He explained that Go-Go has been a part of his life since his birth and the need to ensure that new residents be exposed to the native Washington culture, including Go-Go music.

Caesar Bowman, Bounce Beat Radio & Go-Go Band Perfection, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the ability of Go-Go, especially the business aspect of playing, managing, and promoting the music, providing a positive influence on many locals that would otherwise have been in negative situations.

Christa Joyner, Black Passion Band, testified in support of Bill 23-317. She spoke to the need to expand access to Go-Go and her love for music – Go-Go music in particular.

Geronimo Collins, Founder, All the Fly Kids, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He testified to the need for the District to work with artistic creators in preserving go-go music and culture.

Jason Lewis, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the impact of Go-Go music on his and so many others' lives.

Kevin L. Blackmon, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He detailed that there is no other city on earth where home-grown sound and style of music has had such a longstanding and broad impact.

Adofo Salim, Commissioner, ANC 8C07, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He described his first exposure to Go-Go as a DJ and the importance to the community.

Salih Williams, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He suggested renaming the bill the "Go-Go Documentation of Sacrifice...."

Andre Lee, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He recalled a number of clubs that were pioneers in the creation and expansion of Go-Go and further credited Chuck Brown with the founding of the style.

Calvin Henry, Member, Rare Essence, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He stated that making Go-Go the official music of DC is a no brainer and used Rare Essence as an example of the 40-plus years of longevity of Go-Go.

Pierre Harps, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the strength of local communities that have been strengthened by the District's unique culture and the importance of Go-Go music to the District.

Brenda Jones, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. She dispelled the myth that Go-Go music is associated with violence in the community, and that in fact Go-Go music contribute to strengthening communities.

James Woodert, Singer & Songwriter, FutureBandDC, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the need for the District to provide more programming for Go-Go music – the District's homegrown genre. He also spoke to the positive economic impact of Go-Go.

Malik DOPE Drummer, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He testified that Go-Go music has changed the lives of so many and even the acceptance by crowds of all backgrounds of Go-Go music.

Wesley Holmes, Public Witness, testified in support of Bill 23-317. He spoke to the connection between that arts, culture, and Go-Go music to engage youth the in District.

Raheem DaVaughn, National Recording Artist, testified in support of Bill 23-317.

Natasha Kelly, (Ms. Lady), testified in support of Bill 23-317. She explained the various music genres specific to so many other locations and that Go-Go in the District should be no different.

Angie Gates, Director, Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment, testified that the Executive supports Bill 23-317.

There was no testimony or written comments in opposition to Bill 23-317.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Bill 23-317 amends D.C. Official Code § 47-2820 to remove outdated prohibitions on youth attending dance halls. Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019,” designates the Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia and requires the Mayor to create a plan for preserving go-go music.

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2023 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed legislation. A copy of the December 16, 2019 Fiscal Impact Statement is attached to this report.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

<u>Section 1</u>	States the short title of the Bill 23-317.
<u>Section 2</u>	Describes the importance of go-go music and designates go-go music as the official music of the District of Columbia.
<u>Section 3</u>	Requires the Mayor to develop a plan to support, preserve, and archive G-Go music and its history.
<u>Section 4</u>	Repeals a minor curfew provision related to dance halls and balls.
<u>Section 5</u>	Establishes the effective date by stating the standard 30-day congressional review language.

IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. Bill 23-317 as introduced.
2. Written testimony and comments.
3. Fiscal Impact Statement.
4. Legal Sufficiency Review.
5. Committee Print for Bill 23-317.

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 : June 05, 2019

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Legislative Meeting on Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019", B23-0317

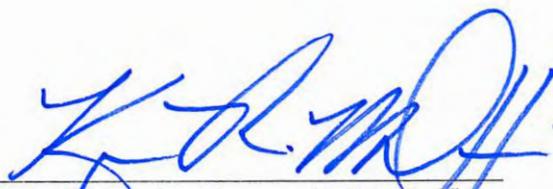
INTRODUCED BY: Councilmembers McDuffie, Nadeau, Bonds, Evans, Cheh, Silverman, Allen, Grosso, Todd, R. White, T. White, Gray, and Chairman Mendelson

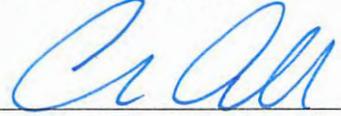
The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole.

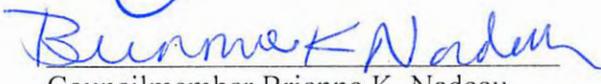
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cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services


Chairman Phil Mendelson

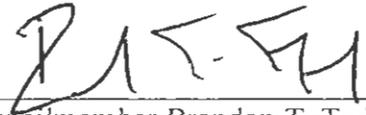

Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

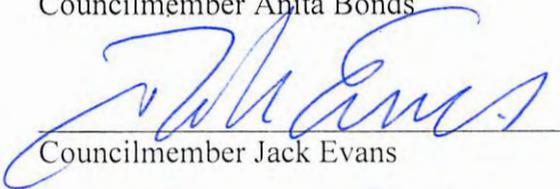

Councilmember Charles Allen


Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

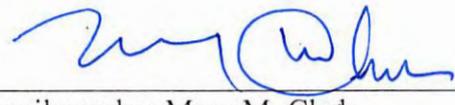

Councilmember David Grosso

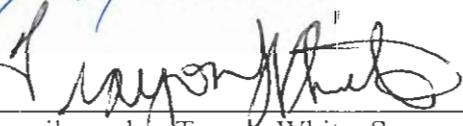

Councilmember Anita Bonds

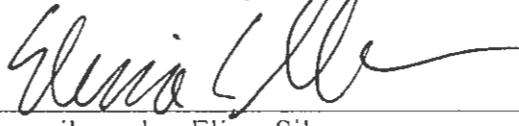

Councilmember Brandon T. Todd

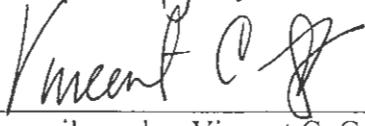

Councilmember Jack Evans


Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.


Councilmember Mary M. Choh


Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.


Councilmember Elissa Silverman


Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To designate Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia, and to require the Mayor to implement a program to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history.

43 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
44 act may be cited as the "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of
45 2019".

46 Sec. 2. Go-Go music; background.

47 (a) Go-Go music originated in the District of Columbia during the mid-1960s to late
48 1970s.

49 (b) Initially, Go-Go was the term used to identify a music club where young people
50 gathered, where between songs the percussion section of the band would continue to play while
51 the band leader engaged the audience through melodic call and response sessions.

52 (c) Go-Go is a fusion of musical forms, drawing inspiration from funk, blues, soul, and
53 salsa, blending them seamlessly with its syncopated polyrhythms and multiple percussion
54 instruments.

55 (d) During the 1980s, the Department of Parks and Recreation "Munch for Lunch"
56 program used its Showmobile, a stage on wheels, to provide free Go-Go concerts in various
57 locations several times a week for lunchtime crowds to enjoy.

58 (e) The 1987 hit "Da Butt" by Chuck Brown, known as the Godfather of Go-Go, and the
59 group Experience Unlimited, also known as E.U., on the soundtrack for Spike Lee's film School
60 Daze helped bring Go-Go to a national stage.

61 (f) Many local residents who went on to join groups such as Rare Essence, Trouble Funk,
62 Junkyard Band, Backyard Band, TCB, TOB, and Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers gained
63 their musical experience in District public school marching bands.

64 (g) Go-Go music encapsulates the range of personal experiences in local communities
65 around the District and expresses them in a unifying force.

66 (h) Go-Go music is a multifaceted art form that fully captures the cultural and artistic
67 expressions of the District.

68 Sec. 3. Designation.

69 Go-Go music is hereby designated the official music of the District of Columbia.

70 Sec. 4. Preservation of Go-Go Music.

71 (a) Within 240 days of the effected date of this act, the Mayor, or the Mayor's designee,
72 shall design and implement a program to support and preserve, including through marketing, and
73 archive Go-Go music and documents relating to Go-Go music and its history.

74 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

75
76 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact
77 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
78 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

79 Sec. 6. Effective date.

80 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
81 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
82 provided in section 602(c)(2) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,
83 1973 (87 Stat. 788; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(2)), and publication in the District of
84 Columbia Register.

I first would like to thank the 80,000 people who signed our #DONTMUTEDC petition, Go-Go Music advocates and Councilman McDuffie and fellow council members responsible for this hearing because we would not be here for this historic hearing if it wasn't for you.

I can remember it like it was yesterday, sneaking out the house at age 13 to go to the Masonic Temple, the Washington Coliseum and Roosevelt Senior High to see Chuck Brown, Trouble Funk, EU, Pump Blenders and Class Band on many nights and it was fun until that night grandma Floyd caught me sneaking in the house as she was patiently waiting with her belt as I tried to creep back in through the door I left unlocked. I remember those Tuesday nights at the IbeX with Backyard.

I remember bands playing weekly at block parties across the city every weekend with nobody getting killed or complaining that our music was noise or too loud. GoGo Music was a major part of DC's Economy from Ward 8 to U street to Georgetown.

If you don't believe me, go ask Princes and Princes In Georgetown or the Hugo Boss Shop and they would tell you if only they could bring those good ole days back!! Better yet, ask Ben's Chili Bowl or the Florida Avenue Grill would they have survived without all those people who left those weekly go-go's to eat at their establishments before they went home. This was the pre-Obama photo era.

Years later, an evil force pushed crack and high-powered guns into our community and cities once populated by African Americans. Things have have never been the same.

Our history, Our Culture and Our very existence would go under attack from that point on. People who meant us no good would get their yellow ink pens and just focus on the negative along with the producer of the movie "Good to Go." A movie which did the opposite of what the producers said they were going to portray our music and culture as.

Then many established Washingtonians left, and the control board came in and the took the trades and music programs out of our schools which was an attack and demise for DC Natives as it killed prosperity for future generations to come.

It was the beginning of the attack on eliminating our direct line to employment, history and culture as it was done in this same city as it was done to the Anacostia Indians who were here along the Anacostia river before us all. Better yet we don't have to go back that far, remember we let developers tear down the DC Icon Marvin Gay's House.

Upon me coming home from prison in late 1994, sacrificing working 9 years with no compensation starting with Almalik squashing beefs at Cease Fire Don't Smoke the Brothers was hard.

What kept me and so many brothers from going back to the streets was Go-Go music. I was a Go-Go promoter and that paid my bills having parties that people like Monica and Mike Tyson attended in their primes at venues like Children Museum. Any hip Washingtonian remembers Reddoor Moe of Reddoor Entertainment.

I remember protesting in the streets at Thomas Circle with Cease Fire Don't Smoke the Brother as I was a youth organizer when we shut down 14th street with hundreds of youth taking control of the control board fighting these unjust sanctions enacted upon the people of the District of Columbia as they threw the babies out with the bath water.

Just think it was over twenty years ago when we led protest with Big G and the Backyard Band playing on the steps of the Wilson building and we have the footage.

There are those who have been fighting to preserve our music and culture before and after these milestones

We would use Go-Go to teach youth about practicing citizenship with Marches that had thousands of youth following and believing in peace marching down MLK Ave with Me and Big G and community leaders and it had an effect on the violence and well-being of our city.

We used Go-Go's to finalize truces with Backyard and TOB at the Peace Go-Go's the Market lounge (Documented in Washington Post)

I remember organizing leaders like Polo from TCB and others in Go-Go to save all the Black clothing stores when their manufacture "Vizons crossed the line and nearly put them out of business. This was also documented in the Washington Post.

I remember fighting PG County Bill C-B 18 and the all-out attack on DC Nightlife and Go-Go Clubs in DC as I was the guy they called when they were attacked by gentrifiers or people looking to pass the buck with unjust stereotypes instead of addressing the root cause.

Many of us never stopped as we worked to uplift and preserve our culture by producing several Go-Go awards and I will never forget standing on the stage at the Washington Convention Center where we held the 2008 Go-Go Awards when we inducted Chuck Brown into the Go-Go Hall of Fame and did the same for Little Benny in 2009 shortly before he got his wings.

In 2008 I announced that we would have a Go-Go Museum and then several elected officials like Kwame Brown said it would and should happen.

Well sadly he's gone but we are planning on opening the first phase of the Go-Go Museum and Hall of Fame Café in Historic Anacostia.

This coming January, thanks to a Great Streets grant and 4 years of struggling in Anacostia to now be self-sufficient from our hard work, our small base of loyal supporters and now traffic brought by Bus Boys and Poets.

There are so many people who have been fighting to keep our music, culture and very existence alive in this city and this bill is a spark that will enhance the Spark that came from The Metro PCS T-Mobile rebellion.

By the way at this year's Go-Go Awards the Lady by the name of the "Shay" will get the Humanitarian of the Year award because you helped us! You inspired me and Natalie to do petition that got over 80,000 signatures after Donald Cambell, the owner of Metro PSC called me to assist once again and within 48 hours the people young, old, black and white spoke in DC and we declared victory.

We are awakened, we are watching, and we are acting as we expect this bill to pass just as we expect bill that will help people and businesses who were here when nobody wanted to be here from being displaced in Anacostia.

We want a Go-Go walk of fame going down MLK Ave blocks from the Fredrick Douglass house. We are creating multiple approaches of teaching our children and new Washingtonians our culture and music which was nearly stripped from us.

We want to make sure people know we expect our culture, music and history to be supported by resources not meme's and photo ops. We want people from our community on arts commission boards as decisions are about to be made without us. Thank you for this opportunity and I'm open for questions.
#WEAREDC #WEAREGOGO

Good afternoon council members, my colleagues in music, my DC family and those representing Gogo music in surrounding areas. Thank you, Council member McDuffie, for having this hearing and allowing me to speak on behalf of my community and for Gogo music on this momentous day. I am so very proud to be here.

My first memory of Gogo music is similar to my other earliest childhood memories. The visual is somewhat foggy but I vividly remember sounds, feelings and energy. It was a neighborhood block party. The street was closed off. I remember other kids running around, playing, dancing. I remember the music. The rhythm. The drum. I remember feeling happy and I remember the feeling of home. Since then, I've accumulated countless other priceless memories that are much more vivid. The first time I went to an actual brick and mortar Gogo. I snuck out of the house and walked a block up 5th street NW to Calvin Coolidge Senior High School, my alma mater, to go to a Gogo where bands played in the old gym and cafeteria and I also remember getting my behind handed to me when I got home that night. The funny thing is, I barely remember the spanking, but I do remember standing in the cafeteria watching the band play in wonder and amazement at the vibe of the crowd, the dancing and, again, the rhythm. The drums.

That Gogo beat was the soundtrack of my youth. It was the heartbeat of my city and it still is. To say that Gogo music is DC is an understatement. The Godfather of Gogo, Chuck Brown gifted our beloved city with more than just music. He gave us culture. He gave us comraderie. He unified us through music in a way that made us all extended family under this magical umbrella called Gogo.

In a time where disharmony is being promoted from a place mere footsteps away from where we all are gathered today in our great city, I think its more important now than ever that we name, uplift and legitimize the things that bring us together. Making Gogo music DC's official music is an excellent way to exemplify the importance of music and its impact on culture and community. Gogo has employed hundreds of artists, musicians, sound companies, security companies, brought revenue to venue owners and given peripheral opportunities to other businesses to their staff, bartenders, hosts and others.

The impact of Gogo music can be felt worldwide, from national hits and its influence on other genres of music where you hear that Gogo beat and know that we created it. It makes us all stand a little taller, hold our heads a little higher and makes us proud to be Washingtonians. Therefore, I urge you all today to pass the **The GO GO Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019** and I want to express my sincere gratitude for giving our music and our culture the recognition that it deserves. I am Gogo. We are Gogo. Don't Mute DC!

Thank you.

Michelle Blackwell

10-30-19

BILL 23-317, GO GO OFFICIAL MUSIC OF DC DESIGNATION ACT 2019

GOOD MORNING TO MY FORMER BOSS CHAIRMAN MENDELSON AND OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF. THIS BILL WAS INTRODUCED ON JUNE 4, 2019 AND SIGNED BY ALL 13 MEMBERS AS IT SHOULD BE.

GOGO MUSC WAS STARTED BY MY DAD CHUCK BROWN IN THE LATE 60'S EARLY 70'S. IT IS NO QUESTION THAT THIS IS AND SHOULD BE THE OFFICIAL MUSIC OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. FOR IT IS HERE WHERE IT STARTED, GREW, SPREAD, AND HAS VENTURED INTO AND ALL OVER THE WORLD.

MANY USE OUR MUSIC, SOME SHOW RESPECT AND ACKNOWLEDGE IT/US AND UNFORTUNATELY SOME DON'T. CHUCK BROWN AND THE SOUL SEARCHERS HAVE PLAYED ALL ACROSS THIS CITY AND THE WORLD. FOLLOWED BY EU, AND RARE ESSENCE AND TROUBLE FUNK TO NAME A FEW.

MANY YEARS AGO, TROUBLE FUNK PLAYED WEEKLY IN GEORGETOWN AT THE PARAGON (UPPER WISCONSIN AVE) WHICH UNFORTUNATELY NOW PROBABLY IT WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED.

MANY OF THE BANDS HAVE MEMBERS WHO HAVE RAISED FAMILIES FROM PLAYING, SENT CHILDREN TO COLLEGE, PURCHASED HOMES, LIVED PRODUCTIVE LIVES AND PAY TAXES FROM THIS MUSIC.

HOW MANY FOLKS CAN PLAY AN INSTRUMENT THESE DAYS.....MANY OF THE BAND MEMBERS WERE SELF TAUGHT ON THE HOW TO.....SOME TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE MUSIC CLASSES OFFERED IN DCPS WHEN THEY WERE IN SCHOOL. NEVERTHELESS, THEY ARE MUSICANS

BUT THE BEST PART OF IT ALL IS IT STARTED RIGHT HERE AND THIS IS WORTHY TO BE HONORED. CURRENTLY I MANAGE A BAND NOW MYSELF. IT IS SOMEWHAT A HEALING PROCESS FOR ME BECAUSE I MISS THE DAYS OF BEING ON STAGE WITH MY DAD. I MISS HIS PRESENCE PERIOD.

MANY OF YOU ON THE DIAS KNOW I ADVOCATED FOR HIS STREET SIGN WHILE WORKING HERE BECAUSE I WANTED HIM TO RECEIVE HIS BLESSING WHILE ALIVE. I REMEMBER THAT HEARING AND A FEW OF YOU WERE HERE AS WELL..... HE CRIED THE ENTIRE TIME. HE DIDN'T TESTIFY BUT HE SAT HERE FOR THE ENTIRE HEARING. ONCE IT WAS APPROVED AND WE DID THE DEDICATION HE RODE DOWN 7TH ST ALMOST DAILY TO JUST LOOK UP AT THE SIGN.... HE LOVED IT AND SO APPRECIATED IT.

WHEN HE PASSED AND WHAT SOME FOLKS DON'T KNOW IS THERE WERE FOLKS WHO DIDN'T WANT THE PARK WE NOW HAVE "ANYWAY" IN HONOR OF HIM. YES, THERE WAS OPPOSITION TO THE CHUCK BROWN PARK BUT LOOK WHAT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES COME OUT AND FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER. SO, TO THOSE THAT SAY WHY WOULD WE NEED A HEARING FOR SOMETHING THAT SEEMS SO "MATTER OF FACT" THAT IS WHY.

IT IS WITH PRIDE AND PLEASURE IN ME TO KNOW THE BEST DIRECTOR (ANGIE GATES) WILL BE AT THE HELM OF THIS GREAT TASK SO I KNOW WHATEVER SHE HAS PLANNED WILL BE FANTASTIC!

I THANK THIS COUNCIL AND OUR MAYOR FOR CARING AND WANTING TO SHOWCASE SOMETHING WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF.... OUR SOUND, OUR MUSIC, OUR BRAND....GO GO MUSIC!

Cherita Cook Whitely

My name is Geronimo Collins and I'm presenting testimony as a creator, an urban griot, a keeper of black culture, and a go-go music fan. I'm the host of a podcast called The All the Fly Kids Show and for the past three years have talked to culture creators in DC, New York City, Atlanta, and New Orleans about their work and contributions across several industries. Being present at this hearing is important to me because it would otherwise have been disingenuous. And to that, I say this - Go-Go Music is Black culture. The social culture created by go-go music is one of many genres within Black music, all derived from a DNA code reaching back farther than most history books will ever mention. Go-Go from its inception has been and remains influential and transformational. It has inspired countless youth from the city and beyond its borders over the past 40+ years to pick up everything from brass instruments to plastic buckets to perform the city's sound.

Go-Go, along with the nickname "Chocolate City," is still an identifier for those not residing in DC but who spent considerable time in the city or around people from the region who are fans of the genre. I've lived in and traveled to many cities in this country. When I tell them the proximity of the District of Columbia to where I grew up in Oxon Hill, Maryland, the first words out of their mouths are "Chocolate City!" or "You be listening to that go-go?"

While the city became whiter over the past 20 years, and the music career aspirations of the city's Black youth continue to favor hip-hop over go-go, the passing of this legislation is an opportunity for the city to do two things:

- 1) Create an environment that is economically viable and mutually beneficial for the go-go community and the city
- 2) To ensure the history of go-go music and its legends is not lost on native Washingtonians, new residents, and the world

I recently spent ten months living in New Orleans, Louisiana. During my stay, I befriended and made the acquaintance of numerous people and used my podcast to learn about New Orleans from a native perspective. The city has built a bridge between its world-famous tourism and all its music - whether it be hip-hop driven bounce, brass-heavy jazz, or the cajun flare of zydeco. On any given night, a retrofitted school-bus-turned-party-bus can be seen traveling down Canal Street with bounce music blaring from the open windows as tourists, and sometimes residents, are enjoying the most recent music genre born in New Orleans. Brass bands made up of Black teens and early twentysomethings can be heard playing for crowds each night inside the French Quarter. Every New Orleans wedding ends with a second line band taking the party to the streets for all to see. Even Juvenile's "Back That Azz Up" will still command people of all races in New Orleans to stop what they're doing to enjoy a quick break from

reality. The musical landscape of New Orleans is one that its residents and visitors have come to expect. If the leaders of New Orleans were to treat its homegrown sounds like a convenient afterthought, there would be a greater socioeconomic divide and less revenue for the city as a whole to enjoy.

Washington, DC is a global city, now more than ever. According to Destination DC 2018 statistics, DC had 21.9 million U.S. visitors and 1.9 million visitors from abroad, with the majority of visitors coming for leisure and vacation. The United Kingdom had the 2nd largest number of DC visitors from abroad last year, a region that's no stranger to go-go music. Little Benny & The Masters and Redds & The Boys, two of go-go's founding bands experienced chart-topping success in the UK in the early 1980s. London was such a hotbed for go-go music in the 1980s, the BBC made a documentary called *Welcome to the Go-Go*.

This is a short list of examples to encourage DC to work with its creators in preserving go-go music and culture as not only a time capsule or source of revenue, but also to show pride in the city many call home. "Chocolate City" is more than a namesake of DC's past - it's the place where Black Washingtonians created a sound that saved more lives than it took, enabling many of those lives to share the sound across the world. To not pass the *Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019* would continue to deny the city and the Go-Go community cultural and economic opportunities. It would also be disingenuous to the Black people of Washington, DC. And to that, again I say this - Go-Go Music is Black culture. Sign the bill to keep the culture alive.

Committee of the Whole Public Hearing
Wednesday, October 30, 2019 (4:00pm)
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 500, Washington, DC 20004

B23-317, "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019"

Good Afternoon Chairman Mendelson, Councilman McDuffie and all who serve on this committee. My Name is Kevin L. Blackmon - professionally known as Uno Boss. I am a Southeast, Washington, DC Native, DC Public School alumni and longtime DC resident.

Go-Go Music has been a part of my life since I could remember. Being raised with brothers who were much older than I, I was introduced to Go-Go Music by way of PA tapes that were blasted in my household. Aside from the tapes, my older brother, Alvin Blackmon, was a drummer in several Go-Go bands in the late 80's and 90's.

Throughout my teen years, I knew of no other genre of music that had the power of Go-Go Music. Some of the biggest rap artist could come to town and the crowd would not respond to them and fully join the party until the Go-Go bands played. From the free shows at recreation centers to the sold-out concerts at the former Capitol Center that we watched on Beta and VHS tapes. As far as I can remember, Go-Go has been King in DC.

But for most DC Natives, Go-Go Music is not only a sound or a genre, it served as a safe haven and village for those seeking refuge from a "city under siege." Washington DC was given that name during Go-Go's rise. Most of us turned to Go-Go bands as an alternative to the street life in our early years. Band practices in our parents and grandparents' basements and turned family homes into safe houses for the hours that the kids were there. The time spent learning and practicing Go-Go Music ensured that they would be out of harm's way or away from the temptations of the streets during their most impressionable years.

Go-Go Music has also been a provider. As both a musician and promoter, Go-Go has kept food on my table providing work. I had the honor of writing and performing music with and for the Godfather of Go-Go, the late Chuck Brown. At one of the lowest points in my adult life he gave me a job and took me on the road to play Go-Go Music which afforded me and others the ability to make a living by playing the music we grew up loving. Musicians have been able to feed their families for decades playing our homegrown Go-Go Music. Not only does Go-Go Music pay the musicians, the managers, sound techs and companies, stagehands, bartenders, promoters and even neighboring businesses who happen to be next to Go-Go venues benefit from the economic effect of Go-Go Music and the fans who love it.

There is no other city on earth where a homegrown sound and style of music has had such a longstanding and broad cultural, social and economic impact on the people who both create and or consume it in my opinion. There is also no other genre where the founder of a sound or style of music has played that music and been successful in 5 different decades and went on to be nominated for a Grammy - the highest musical honor there is - in his 70s.

Chuck Brown and what he created and others who helped and followed his lead have been able to create legacy wise for DC has never been done anywhere in the world for such a small city. For this reason, I believe and know that Go-Go Music should be officially named the Music and Sound of Washington, DC. Today and Forever.

Thank you.

Henry, Alicia (Council)

From: Future Band <futurebanddc@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2019 4:05 PM
To: Henry, Alicia (Council); Cash, Evan W. (Council)
Subject: Testimony for GoGo Bill

Good Afternoon,

My name is James Woodert, singer/songwriter of FutureBandDC and an active member of the urban music community of Washington, DC and the surrounding areas. I have had the honor and privilege of performing at many establishments and events in Washington DC to contribute to the archives of Gogo history, which is why this legislative proposal is near and dear to my heart.

The percussive rhythm of our sound, Gogo music, has been imitated and revered all over the world in popular music culture. The call and response vocal cadences made popular at live gogo performances have become the template that has been mimicked from many world renowned artist.

This illustrious sound of Gogo music has been the soundtrack that has mobilized black, brown, and destitute people for many different movements over the course of the last 50 years. From the DC riots of 1968 that protested racial segregation while still moving to the sounds of a young guitarist by the name of Chuck Brown, the Young Senators, and Black Heat, to present day movements such as #DontMuteDC and #LongLiveGogo that protest against gentrification and the silencing of a historic culture, all of which were held on the corner of 14th and U st.

Gogo Music is our voice and the District of Columbia would be making a huge disservice to its natives by not providing programs that aid in safeguarding something as rich and authentic to DC culture as our very own homegrown genre of music. So, I, James Woodert, ask the powers that be, as you move forward in your deliberations and processes to review "Bill 23-0317" Gogo Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019, that you simply.....remember us. The people on the frontline that live and breathe every day to push our culture forward, the people that are born and raised on the sound of our music. The people that work hard to continue to support, preserve, and perform at Gogos throughout DC, the people that continue to influence the world. Remember us.

Thank you.

James Woodert

Sent from my iPhone



**Full Circle
Entertainment, Inc.**

November 3, 2019

Re: Bill 23-317 Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act 2019

Dear Committee of the Whole,

I attended the October 30th hearing about the above referenced bill. I was Chuck Brown's long-time manager, I continue to manage the Chuck Brown Band, and represent the Brown estate. I have also assisted numerous artists in this genre, including for over 20 years through my previous company's pressing and distribution deals with almost all of the Go-Go bands. I currently manage and work in the music industry with national artists in other genres as well.

While I could extol the importance and influence of Go-Go music in my life, this was done in a heartfelt manner by most of those testifying at the hearing. I would instead like to highlight other aspects of the genre in support of the proposed designation. The creator of the genre, Chuck Brown, was a father figure to generations of Washingtonians. His ability to create a safe and enjoyable atmosphere at his events, while engaging the audience through call and response, teaching right from wrong, promoting education, self-worth and good behavior, all while creating a sense of community had and continues to have repercussions in the lives of generations of District residents far beyond the music. Many of these traditions are still a part of the genre. District residents maintain a sense of pride in the home-grown music they grew up with. Here are some ways the music has been elevated by others, which should lend some weight in the Committee's decision. The National Endowment for the Arts awarded Chuck Brown a lifetime heritage fellowship, the Federal Government's highest honor for folk and traditional arts, for developing and shaping a musical genre. Go-Go music has been both performed at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and panel discussions about the genre have been held there. The National Visionary Leadership Project recognized Chuck Brown's contributions in shaping American history, joining previous honorees such as Ray Charles, Quincy Jones, BB King and Eartha Kitt. Go-Go music was performed on the West Lawn of the Capital with Chuck Brown and the National Symphony Orchestra. Chuck Brown received a Grammy nomination in 2011. There are countless other honors, and though Chuck Brown may have been the recipient, it is the Go-Go music that he created that is the underlying, undeniable foundation of them all.

Chuck Brown toured the World, with pride and purpose, in carrying the music of the District of Columbia and its positive message with him everywhere he went. The people of the District warmly welcomed him home whenever he returned, knowing he represented them and their music to countless fans across the oceans. Both Chuck and now the Chuck Brown Band continue to perform at venues and events that draw a diverse audience. It is common for tourists and non-African American locals to come up to me at local performances in awe of the music and feeling like they had stumbled upon something special that they had never experienced before. The same thing happened and continues to happen in performances from New Orleans to New York. The music is so revered, that whenever Chuck performed with other national acts, especially on the Tom Joyner Fantastic Voyage Cruises or the Super Jazz Cruises, many of the musicians in the other major household name bands would flock to see Chuck Brown's

**FULL CIRCLE ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
301-879-9811 Phone 301-879-9190 Fax**



**Full Circle
Entertainment, Inc.**

performance. While these are snippets into Chuck Brown's history and impact, they relate to and are inextricably intertwined with the genre as a whole. This is DC's music.

To me, the passing of this bill is only the first step. It must be combined with a number of other critical commitments. While preserving the music's history and infusing its history in the education system are critical, I believe both subliminal and not so subliminal genre visibility is of the utmost importance and essential to execute hand in hand with the passage of this bill. Budget was discussed at the hearing. I believe many of the critical visibility goals could be accomplished with minimal resources, by prioritizing positive imaging and audio in outward facing District branding. I would be happy to discuss ideas with the Council, Mayor's office and/or OCTFME in that regard. While we embrace Go-Go's history, we must look for opportunities to expand the music's future in a way that shines a favorable light on both the genre and the District.

Sincerely,

Tom Goldfogle
President
Full Circle Entertainment, Inc.

**FULL CIRCLE ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
301-879-9811 Phone 301-879-9190 Fax**

Price, Destiny (Council)

From: Barbara Fleming <barbarafleming28@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2019 8:50 PM
To: Committee of the Whole (Council)
Subject: Go-Go music

I have lived in DC 65 years. Everyday a notice another place/ pieces of my life in DC gone. Sometimes I have to really take spook around to know where a I am. My life is being knocked down little by little. Please keep Go-Go music for us older people. This is my home let have something to remember it is home.

Barbara Fleming



☎ 202-246-7077

✉ LearningWithGoGo@Gmail.com

🌐 www.LearningWithGoGo.com

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Allene Bryant, a D.C. native and co-founder of Learning With GoGo—an educational entertainment brand.

I'm writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed bill that would make go-go the official music of the city—and to emphasize that programs, such as Learning With GoGo, are actively working to positively impact the community while preserving go-go music and D.C. culture.

Unfortunately, as highlighted by the recent issue involving the MetroByTmobile store in the Shaw community, efforts to “mute D.C.” are growing in numbers and, coupled with gentrification and other factors, are attempting to slowly eroding DC culture, bit by bit.

But I refuse to let that happen. My husband and I founded our company, Learning With GoGo, on the premise of preserving D.C. culture while educating youth in literacy and phonics—using the city's beloved go-go music. Our mission is to ensure that all students in early grades are reading at or above their grade level by providing a unique experience for every child with an effective and user-friendly e-learning curriculum. The company is constantly growing and expanding to offer more experiences and services that highlight go-go culture while serving our community.

The fact is: go-go is Washington, D.C., and it must not be muted nor forgotten but rather preserved, archived, and celebrated. And, with Learning With Go-Go, we're making some progress, but are in need of some support—your support—to help make go-go a lasting and powerful tool used to educate, entertain, and empower. In conclusion, I implore you to pass this bill and to provide support for programs that are already doing the work to ensure to a lasting, promising, and sustainable future for our youth and our city's culture.

Sincerely,

Allene J. Bryant

Co-founder of Learning With GoGo

P.O. BOX 30515 Washington, D.C. 20030

November 13, 2019

Committee on the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 410
Washington DC 20004

CC: Mayor Muriel Bowser, Director Angie Gates, Chairman Phil Mendelson, Councilmember Kenyon McDuffie, Councilmember Charles Allen, Councilmember Brienne Nadeau, Councilmember David Grosso, Councilmember Anita Bonds, Councilmember Brandon Todd, Councilmember Robert White, Councilmember Mary Cheh, Councilmember Trayon White, Councilmember Elissa Silverman, Councilmember Vincent Gray, Director Shawn Townsend, Deputy Mayor John Falcicchio, Director Andrew Trueblood, Director Heran Sereke-Brhan

Testimony of Cameron Poles regarding Bill B23-0317 - Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019

Dear Mayor, Directors and the Committee on the Whole,

During my oral testimony on October 30, 2019, I spoke to my love of the District's indigenous music, go-go. From the time I received my first am radio in the early 1980s, I would tune into WOL to listen to the undeniable, infectious, rhythmic drive of Trouble Funk, AM/FM Band, JYB, Rare Essence, EU, and, of course, the Godfather, the late, great Chuck Brown. I would push my way to the front to see Backyard and NE Groovers in the late 1980s when they'd play River Terrace ES's field day.

But, this legislation is NOT about those of us who love the music and want to see it elevated. It is, in fact, for those who've never heard of, don't understand or particularly like, and/or actively work to silence go-go music. It is for future generations of Washingtonians. For go-go is a particular African-American cultural expression – the response of Black musical artists in DC to the energy, funk and soul that was a hallmark of the Black Power Movement as it met head on with the conservative restoration signaled by the election of Ronald Regan. It was an exuberant, percussive musical creation that mirrored the exuberance and commitment of predominantly African-American Washington, as DC natives began to spread our civic and political wings in the early years of Home Rule.

Just as one does not have to like the music of Mozart or Bach; just as one does not question the right of jazz or hip-hop or southern rock to exist, so too does go-go deserve the same level of respect as an African-American contribution to Americana. As the demographics of the city continue to shift profoundly along racial and economic lines, the introduction by Councilmember McDuffie and the Council as a whole of the "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019," is timely, necessary, and should be commended. Acknowledging go-go as the city's official music is a monumental step - critical to ensuring the preservation and advancement of DC's native African-American culture and musical traditions.

I agree with my colleagues at Listen Local First who stated in their testimony:

"While this acknowledgement is a first step, it is imperative that this legislation go further than just acknowledging an official genre, this legislation must allocate appropriate

funding to preserve and grow Go-Go music through a series of specific dedicated funding mechanisms."

Listen Local First worked directly with a coalition of DC music artists, industry insiders, and advocates to formulate a plan necessitating adequate funding and additional resources to support the preservation and advancement of go-go. This plan requires amendments to the proposed aforementioned legislation. I endorse this plan and include it here:

FUNDS TO SUPPORT GO-GO ARTISTS & PERFORMANCE

Establish a Touring Fund for Bands: In 2019 professional bands and artists tour to make money off tickets to live shows and grow their fanbase in other markets. Go-Go music is rooted in the live performance and while popular in DC, this vibrant music could grow exponentially as it reaches new ears and audiences in cities around the country and the world. The issues is that touring regularly and travelling to festivals with 8 - 14 band members not including crew is extremely cost prohibitive. There are festivals all over the country that would welcome DC's Go-Go bands and help spread the Go-Go sound, but the booking fees alone will most likely not cover the cost of travel and accommodations for the artists. If this bill establishes a fund that these Go-Go bands could use to cover travel costs they could be reaching new fans and audiences around the country on a regular basis.

When music fans see Zydeco bands and funky brass bands they immediately connect the sound with New Orleans, Lafayette Louisiana and the surrounding area, when music fans hear Go-Go anywhere across the US, that sound should conjure up images images of Washington DC. Music has an incredible power to connect to memory imagination and feeling. Hearing a familiar sound can take a person back to the exact location where they first heard that song or artist. That power is strong and that power is why Go-Go needs to be directly connected to our tourism economy.

This fund would essentially be promoting DC culture and tourism. Having these bands play around the country will expose a whole new world of music fans to DC Culture and give them a whole other reason to come and visit the city. This fund can be established through tourism dollars, through Destination DC, through hotel and Airbnb taxes. This fund should be available on a quarterly basis and should be awarded on a rolling basis as tours and shows are booked.

Go-Go Grant Fund: This fund would allow bands to apply for grants to cover the cost of studio time and professional recording as well as designated performances in public locations. This fund could support performance at DC Parks throughout the summer, performances at the Reeves Center, which used to host regular Go-Go shows, the Conventions Center other historic locations around the city. Inorder to educate the public about Go-Go there needs to be more Go-Go available to the public on a regular basis. These grants could be made available through specific set asides in the DCCAH budget or could also come from a tourism tax or funding vehicle since these some of this funding will go to free public performances around the city that can bring residents and tourists together to witness the city's music.

Go-Go Workforce Fund: In any music genre only a small percentage of the musicians make the majority of their income from their recordings and live performance. Therefore this fund should be established as a creative workforce development effort and a way to help Go-Go artists age in place. By training and educating artists about alternative creative revenue streams and offering job training in related fields of production, sound engineering and event

management, these creatives can leverage their musical skill sets into alternate income potential that will allow them to continue to make the music that they love.

This type of program can be funded in part by the Office of Aging, DSLBD or potentially Office of Cable Television Film Music and Entertainment. There are also many national foundations, nonprofits and government agencies that can help connect cities and municipalities to the resources they need to help expand these tools locally.

Go-Go Facilities Incentive Initiative: This initiative would provide a tax break to venues that regularly host Go-Go shows and those that provide space for bands to practice. The flip side to this incentive would be a series of fines for any venue that requires Go-Go bands to pay a security fee up front, or pay for additional artist insurance. Any venues that deploys these discriminatory tactics should be fined and those fines should go to support other Go-Go incentives. This initiative would be very easy to include in the legislation and implement because it does not require a specific allocation in the budget. This initiative will however need to be supervised and monitored and those costs and administration will need to rest within an office, preferably the Office of Creative Affairs or the Office of Nightlife and Culture.

Go-Go City Ambassadors: In order for government and the creative community to work together and have the greatest positive impact, creatives need to be better versed about the inner workings of local governments and the delineation between different agencies and government offices. Likewise workers and agency officials within the government need to better understand how their work impacts the creative community. Listen Local First has advocated for years to create a program where local creatives can seek part time paid fellowships in agencies throughout the DC government. Having creatives as part of city agencies can also breathe new life and inspiration into programs and operations. If the city funded part time employment opportunities/ fellowships for Go-Go creatives who care about government policy, that can help build stronger relationships to address the needs of their community. We would love to see Go-Go ambassadors working with MPD, Fire & EMS, DC Parks & Rec, Office of Creative Affairs, DC Office of Planning and so many more. This type of funding would need to be allocated in the operating budgets of the different agencies. This funding can also start off as a pilot program or grant offered through employment services covering the cost for these first round of fellowships at various agencies.

Go-Go Music Festival: Festivals like Broccoli City Festival, All Things Go Fall Classic, National Cannabis Festival, Funk Parade, DC Reggae Festival and H Street Festival have become arts and culture staples of the city. They draw DC residents from all Wards as well as visitors and tourists from across the country. If the city were to fund a national Go-Go Festival that gave a platform for all of our talented DC artists to perform and grow new audiences, it could become a nationally recognizable destination music event like New Orleans Jazz Festival within a handful of years. An event like this would need to leverage serious funding from organizations like Events DC and the DC Economic Partnership bringing in new corporate partners who share in the vision of investing in DC's cultural traditions and history.

Go-Go Media Preservation Fund: Every thriving music scene has a thriving arts media community that supports it and helps spread the message. If the goal of this legislation is to uplift Go-Go the Council should consider taking action to uplift local media that covers Go-Go. This support could include stipends for local print and online media journalists who write about and cover Go-Go, support for photographers, podcasters, videographers, sound recorders who document and record live Go-Go performances and finally support for radio

programs and stations online or on traditional formats that specialize in Go-Go. The DMV has its own 24 Hour Go-Go Radio station, Go-Go Radio Live has been operating for close to a decade covering Go-Go Music and Go-Go bands 24/7. This legislation should aim to help media outlets like Go-Go Radio move back into the district with some resources to become a premiere outlet to support DC's historic local artform.

The city currently spends a very large amount of money on our city run media outlets. A successful media landscape is one that is diversified and supports original programming and ideas in the spaces where they exist. If just a portion of the resources being used for city owned media outlets could be diverted to support independent programming that could have an enormous impact on the arts community as a whole.

FUNDS TO SUPPORT GO-GO HISTORIC PRESERVATION

For years before the Don't Mute DC Movement we have been hearing from members of the Go-Go community about the need to create a real Go Go Archive to preserve the history through recordings, video, pictures, posters and more. While DC Public Library has already started the process of launching an official city archives there is still an incredible amount of funding needed to properly document decades of music history. The members of the Don't Mute DC Movement have already shared some of their thoughts on how archival funding should be approached, we are just reiterating some of those points and would like to make sure that funding for preservation purposes is actually included in the language of the Bill itself.

A Go-Go Museum: This would be one of the largest endeavors and costs but possibly one of the most meaningful and important for the community. The overhead for this type of project would be immense and would involve partnerships with many private entities but there will be funding needs from tax abatements to funding for procurement, programming and general operations that can come from the city.

DC Public Library Go-Go Public Archives: Helping grow this already established public initiative will probably require less funding at the onset but it will be limited by the capacity and future funding of the DC Public Library system and staff. A public archive that is free and completely available to anyone who wants to access it is extremely useful for research education and historical retention. Depending on how much funding would be allocated to the Archive for on going programming, it could be a living learning center much like a private museum.

Fund for Preservation Procurement Digitization and Archiving: Whether the community sets up a Go-Go Museum or the city decides to properly fund a robust DC Public Library Archive there will need to be a fund for the procurement, digitization and archiving of sound recordings, video, photography, artwork, poster design and memorabilia. Individuals and organizations throughout the DMV like Donald Campbell and the Globe Poster Printing Co have spent years collecting and cataloging recordings and prints from concerts. If the community wants these archives to be available to the public through a free public archive, like the library archive, there will need to be funds allocated for the procurement of these collections as well as funds for the proper digitization and archiving of these historical records.

Establishing the funding for these types of historic preservation should not be difficult, the majority of the funding will need to be allocated up front with other funding mechanisms that can kick in down the road. The city might start by reaching out to any number of national academic

institutions based in the District to leverage some of their historic preservation and archiving resources. The archive itself once established as a museum or a public archive would be able to generate some income for continued preservation through events, donors and licensing archival material to other institutions and for commercial purposes.

Another possibility for funding the procurement and archivings of Go-Go recordings/ memorabilia etc would be the funds used for the DC Public Art Bank. In the last two fiscal years the city has spent between \$250,000 to \$400,000 per year on procurement of new art. Spending some of that money on securing these historic Go-Go collections may be a noteworthy way to really invest in the community and show real support for Go-Go as a true art form.

FUNDS TO SUPPORT A GO-GO CURRICULUM AND LIVE MUSIC EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This final but most important funding initiative that should be included in this monumental legislation is the funding that should be allocated to Go-Go education. Again we defer to the letter that was sent to Councilmember McDuffie's Office on Nov 9th outlining the different initiatives the community has asked to have funded. We want to reiterate that unless this funding is committed in this legislation, the legislation does not go far enough in its support for the Go-Go community.

Funding for a Go-Go Curriculum in Schools: Develop a curriculum that teaches about the history of Go-Go in DC public private and charter schools. This curriculum should incorporate the music, the local musicians, but also the culture, the politics and the divisions that the city had to grow through.

Funding for Live Music Education in All Schools: Bringing live music education especially Go-Go, Jazz and West African Drumming back into the public schools is not only important for cultural preservation but is crucial to child development. This music education needs to begin in elementary school and be available to students as they grow. The commitment to this type of funding is probably the number one thing the city can do to really preserve and grow the culture of Go-Go. This type of funding would provide opportunities for older musicians to work in music education and work to mentor students in the schools, it would also establish a new generation that will carry their interpretation of Go-Go into the future.

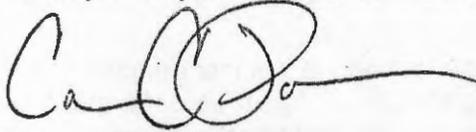
The costs associated with music education could potentially be lowered by committing to partnering with local non profits who already provide after school music programming and do it well. These organizations are well connected to the local music community and investing in them could allow them to grow a model that works well and expand those models citywide. There are multiple organizations that exist in the city that have worked on Go-Go curriculum and have excellent music education and mentorship programs. The city needs to commit to supporting those in the community already putting in the work.

This type of programming and funding also needs to leverage potential creative alternate sources. Other cities around the country have come up with creative ways to leverage publicly available sources of funding to increase music education. One case study would be Denver and how they leveraged HUD federal funding to create an in school mentoring program to pay local musicians part time to work with public school students.

CONCLUSION

As I stated in my oral testimony, it is just and commendable that the City Council is working to honor go-go as the official music of Washington, DC. It is commendable, because as an African-American, I am all too aware of the measures undertaken to belittle, undervalue, and erase aspects of African-American history and culture. It is just because it rights many of the policies put in place by the City Council that undermined go-go's ability to thrive. The legislation must go beyond mere acknowledgment and involve a well thought out inclusive plan made clear in the legislation "that will fund the current movement, future success, and historic preservation of essential DC Culture."

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cameron Poles', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cameron "Cam" Poles,
Co-founder, Black Alley Cooperative Association (c/o Black Alley Band)
Cultural Ambassador
202Creates Resident
Lover of Go-Go Music

Charles C. Stephenson, Jr
Testimony before
Council of the District of Columbia
Committee of the Whole Public Hearing
Wednesday, October 30, 2019
Bill 23-317, Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council:

As the former Chair of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, former manager of the Experience Unlimited Band, co-founder of the Malcolm X Day Committee, Chair of Teach the Beat and co-author of the Beat: Go-Go Music From Washington, DC, I submit this statement to the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole in support of Bill 23-317: Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019. —

I have testified before this body many times regarding go-go music, beginning in 1984, when I was nominated and approved to serve as a commissioner on the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. I then asked this body to recognize and to be supportive of go-go music, because I knew then, as I do now, that this collection of musicians was and is the true heartbeat of the City. Many scorned go-go music because they believed this established genre represented the under belly of the city, and a culture foreign to a segment of Washington. I submit that go-go musicians are our sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, neighbors, teachers, first responders, and most of all they are actually the bedrock of the city as citizens and taxpayers.

Through the years, I have asked the City Government to partner with the go-go community. I first asked for that cooperation in 1988 during the debate on the Public Halls Bill, which imposed an age limit on participants attending go-go venues. This was done in an effort to combat violence and drugs in the community. I advocated for a process that would've allowed the go-go community to work as partners to find alternate measures. I said then that this measure would not stop the violence or end drug wars. The restrictive law passed, and the problem continued to spiral.

During the prevalent violence of the last two decades of the 20th century, the go-go community was willing and able to work with DC officials to offer progressive solutions. Bands and promoters went on to sponsor and record anti violence and anti-drug songs and concerts that featured the backbone of the bands like Chuck Brown and other leaders.

Now 30 years later, I submit this statement to support your 21st century acknowledgement that go-go is and should be the official music of Washington DC. To each of the Members of the City Council, I say "this is great," but in "real talk", we have miles to go. Declaring it so, it just a beginning. The next step is to support the promotion of go-go music, as it once was in the DC schools, through student musician collaborations and challenges, as well as encouraging the professional musicians to seek concerts and club appearances within the District's city limits.

Allow me to elaborate. If I am a tourist in DC, staying at one of the prominent hotels in the city and I ask the concierge to recommend a club or place where I can hear and experience go-go music, I am certain that question would be met with silence. Unfortunately, the city, unlike other cities, does not have venues dedicated to showcasing the music. This is the case for many reasons, beginning with the fact that the music is still stereotyped as negative and prone to attract untoward behaviors. Club owners, I suspect, are discouraged from offering go-go music. However, in this city you can all seek and find other genres such as rock, pop, jazz, even hip hop, but not go-go. Something is wrong with that picture.

As a city we say we love go-go music. Elected officials, community leaders and everyday residents use go-go groups to bring attention to myriad needs and causes. Bands play at outdoor festivals. But the music is like a stepchild that is hidden until the company leaves and then you say how much you love them.

I cite a few examples of cities that embrace their music genre identity where this fact is clear via their websites:

- Chicago, Illinois for blues – www.choosechicago.com
- Nashville, Tennessee for country – www.visitmusiccity.com
- New Orleans, Louisiana for jazz – www.neworleans.com

The common thread through these cities, is the fact that they promote their declared music genres in their local music, venues, which proves that they actually love their stepchildren. So, if go-go is the official music of DC, then we must “show some love”. Take a look at Washington, DC’s website: www.Washington.org by comparison and the neglect is obvious.

Let me add a few important historical notes. The advent of go-go music started in the city’s public school system, which had stellar music programs and bands. These bands gave students the opportunity explore and learn valuable music lessons. So, the public schools along with the DC Department of Recreation formed the Ambassadors Bands, which showcased the best musicians in the city. As young people who cannot be stopped are likely to do, neighborhood bands also emerged so the student musicians could continue what they learned and enjoyed beyond their school experiences. So, during the 60’s and early 70’s bands such as: Brute, Black Heat, Young Senators, 100 Years Time, 95th Congress, Matadors and the Soul Searchers emerged. These bands were so popular that during the weekend many would play at cabarets such as the Panorama Room, Northeast Gardens, Masonic Temple and to name a few. Please take note that numerous celebrated musicians emerged from the stellar music programs in the DC public schools. To this came national notoriety as Chuck Brown made go-go music even more popular during the disco era. To these facts I add: the DC government is complicit in the popularity of go-go music, because its beginnings created and supported the genre’s original cadre of musicians.

I could go on and on, just like a go-go, but I will conclude my support of Bill 23-317: Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019 with a paramount ask.

Once this bill is passed, please take responsibility for the follow-up actions needed to ensure that this music survives, particularly in the current climate of ongoing gentrification.

I respectfully suggest that the District of Columbia government:

- Develop and support go-go music history programs in the schools, such as Teach the Beat (www.thebeatisgogo.com) which is a program that goes into schools to ensure that students learn about the rich history and the various stylistic elements related to go-go the music genre. The program brings in go-go musicians to interact with students. Teach the Beat also develops curriculum for teacher's instruction.
- Enhance and support broader musical instruction in the DC Public schools.
- Establish a performing arts center to support and ensure that go-go music continues to grow and thrive in Washington, DC. The Center should concentrate on musical instruction, stage performance, song writing, production, sound reinforcement, stage management, communications, recording, stage production and other skills associated with musical production. The Youth Uprising Center in Oakland, California, is a best practice example for such a Center.
- Re-establish the apprentice program (Compared to What) with the American Federation of Musicians of Washington, DC that allowed go-go and other local sound technicians the opportunity to enhance their skills by becoming a member of the union.
- Engage the business community to encourage go-go music performances with discussions about the financial benefits to be derived from shows that include the genre with the help of all DC government departments that intersect with the arts, culture, education, and businesses large and small.

I believe that the city of Washington, DC has missed out on a truly homegrown economic engine for decades. Go-go connoisseurs spend money at restaurants, use public transportation, buy clothes, and of course purchase tickets to go-go concerts and events. There remains a truly undeveloped opportunity to market the music to tourists and the surrounding areas. I sincerely believe that this is a win-win situation for the city, musicians and fans. Washington, DC must follow in the footsteps of cities such as Chicago, Nashville and New Orleans at a minimum to own the genre, enjoy the music, and seek out and support the connections that bring financial benefits to the City.

In conclusion, I applaud your efforts. Now is the time to provide bold and innovative leadership to integrate the positive elements of go-go into the historical and cultural foundations of Washington, DC. Now is time for the DC City Council to "Bust Loose" with progressive and bold change, as you declare Go-Go as the Official Music of the District of Columbia.

November 8, 2019

Committee on the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 410
Washington DC 20004

CC: Mayor Muriel Bowser, Director Angie Gates, Chairman Phil Mendelson, Councilmember Kenyon McDuffie, Councilmember Charles Allen, Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Councilmember David Grosso, Councilmember Anita Bonds, Councilmember Brandon Todd, Councilmember Robert White, Councilmember Mary Cheh, Councilmember Trayon White, Councilmember Elissa Silverman, Councilmember Vincent Gray, Director Shawn Townsend, Deputy Mayor John Falcicchio, Director Andrew Trueblood, Director Heran Sereke-Brhan

Testimony of Listen Local First DC and DC Music Advocates regarding Bill B23-0317 - Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019

Dear Mayor, Directors and the Committee on the Whole,,

Listen Local First DC and a coalition of DC music industry advocates would like to commend Councilmember McDuffie and the Council as a whole for supporting the introduction of the "Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019." Acknowledging Go-Go as the city's official music is a monumental step so critical to uplifting and preserving DC's culture and musical traditions.

While this acknowledgement is a first step, it is imperative that this legislation go further than just acknowledging an official genre, this legislation must allocate appropriate funding to preserve and grow Go-Go music through a series of specific dedicated funding mechanisms.

We believe that a bill that does not identify actual funding mechanism is a bill that supports Go-Go in name but not in action. The type of funding this bill should include covers funding for artists themselves, historical preservation and education. A comprehensive bill could identify a number of potential sources for this funding and could establish a valuable precedent for which agency or office should take on the responsibility of implementing these support mechanisms.

There currently is no agency or office that exists within the District government that has the resources, capacity and focus to take on all initiatives that are fundamental to supporting Go-Go and the broader, growing music community. There has however been a proposal that will allow the creative community to have access to a more comprehensive set of resources than existed under a solely grant funding agency. Through this Bill the Council has the opportunity to potentially define the extremely valuable scope of work and resources needed to launch DC's Office of Creative Affairs and identify one of its first objectives. Establishing that this office will be the administrative go-between and resource connecting tool to manage funding and

programs between agencies and offices is an extremely valuable tool for the Go-Go community and the music community as a whole.

While this Bill should create additional grants for Go-Go artists to record and perform throughout the city, funding for touring, workforce development, aging in place, curriculum development and historical preservation are not all responsibilities that fall under the DC Council on the Arts and Humanities or any one office. The new independent DCCAH will be able to take on new grant making initiatives while all other forms for support needed for the Go-Go community and musicians across the city should be strategically managed out of the new Mayor's Office of Creative Affairs.

In the section below we have listed a number of potential funding opportunities that should be included in the final version of this historical legislation. In most cases we have tried to suggest potential avenues for funding new initiatives. If the Council wishes to take this historic step we ask that instead of just voting on this current legislation, the Council should fully fund it, go all the way, hit that Grand Slam and #FinishtheFight like the Washington Nationals did.

FUNDS TO SUPPORT GO-GO ARTISTS & PERFORMANCE

Establish a Touring Fund for Bands: In 2019 professional bands and artists tour to make money off tickets to live shows and grow their fanbase in other markets. Go-Go music is rooted in the live performance and while popular in DC, this vibrant music could grow exponentially as it reaches new ears and audiences in cities around the country and the world. The issues is that touring regularly and travelling to festivals with 8 - 14 band members not including crew is extremely cost prohibitive. There are festivals all over the country that would welcome DC's Go-Go bands and help spread the Go-Go sound, but the booking fees alone will most likely not cover the cost of travel and accommodations for the artists. If this bill establishes a fund that these Go-Go bands could use to cover travel costs they could be reaching new fans and audiences around the country on a regular basis.

When music fans see Zydeco bands and funky brass bands they immediately connect the sound with New Orleans, Lafayette Louisiana and the surrounding area, when music fans hear Go-Go anywhere across the US, that sound should conjure up images images of Washington DC. Music has an incredible power to connect to memory imagination and feeling. Hearing a familiar sound can take a person back to the exact location where they first heard that song or artist. That power is strong and that power is why Go-Go needs to be directly connected to our tourism economy.

This fund would essentially be promoting DC culture and tourism. Having these bands play around the country will expose a whole new world of music fans to DC Culture and give them a whole other reason to come and visit the city. This fund can be established through tourism dollars, through Destination DC, through hotel and Airbnb taxes. This fund should be available on a quarterly basis and should be awarded on a rolling basis as tours and shows are booked.

Go-Go Grant Fund: This fund would allow bands to apply for grants to cover the cost of studio time and professional recording as well as designated performances in public locations. This fund could support performance at DC Parks throughout the summer, performances at the Reeves Center, which used to host regular Go-Go shows, the Conventions Center other historic locations around the city. In order to educate the public about Go-Go there needs to be more Go-Go available to the public on a regular basis. These grants could be made available through specific set asides in the DCCAH budget or could also come from a tourism tax or funding vehicle since some of this funding will go to free public performances around the city that can bring residents and tourists together to witness the city's music.

Go-Go Workforce Fund: In any music genre only a small percentage of the musicians make the majority of their income from their recordings and live performance. Therefore this fund should be established as a creative workforce development effort and a way to help Go-Go artists age in place. By training and educating artists about alternative creative revenue streams and offering job training in related fields of production, sound engineering and event management, these creatives can leverage their musical skill sets into alternate income potential that will allow them to continue to make the music that they love.

This type of program can be funded in part by the Office of Aging, DSLBD or potentially Office of Cable Television Film Music and Entertainment. There are also many national foundations, nonprofits and government agencies that can help connect cities and municipalities to the resources they need to help expand these tools locally.

Go-Go Facilities Incentive Initiative: This initiative would provide a tax break to venues that regularly host Go-Go shows and those that provide space for bands to practice. The flip side to this incentive would be a series of fines for any venue that requires Go-Go bands to pay a security fee up front, or pay for additional artist insurance. Any venues that deploys these discriminatory tactics should be fined and those fines should go to support other Go-Go incentives. This initiative would be very easy to include in the legislation and implement because it does not require a specific allocation in the budget. This initiative will however need to be supervised and monitored and those costs and administration will need to rest within an office, preferably the Office of Creative Affairs or the Office of Nightlife and Culture.

Go-Go City Ambassadors: In order for government and the creative community to work together and have the greatest positive impact, creatives need to be better versed about the inner workings of local governments and the delineation between different agencies and government offices. Likewise workers and agency officials within the government need to better understand how their work impacts the creative community. Listen Local First has advocated for years to create a program where local creatives can seek part time paid fellowships in agencies throughout the DC government. Having creatives as part of city agencies can also breathe new life and inspiration into programs and operations. If the city funded part time employment opportunities/ fellowships for Go-Go creatives who care about government policy, that can help build stronger relationships to address the needs of their community. We would

love to see Go-Go ambassadors working with MPD, Fire & EMS, DC Parks & Rec, Office of Creative Affairs, DC Office of Planning and so many more. This type of funding would need to be allocated in the operating budgets of the different agencies. This funding can also start off as a pilot program or grant offered through employment services covering the cost for these first round of fellowships at various agencies.

Go-Go Music Festival: Festivals like Broccoli City Festival, All Things Go Fall Classic, National Cannabis Festival, Funk Parade, DC Reggae Festival and H Street Festival have become arts and culture staples of the city. They draw DC residents from all Wards as well as visitors and tourists from across the country. If the city were to fund a national Go-Go Festival that gave a platform for all of our talented DC artists to perform and grow new audiences, it could become a nationally recognizable destination music event like New Orleans Jazz Festival within a handful of years. An event like this would need to leverage serious funding from organizations like Events DC and the DC Economic Partnership bringing in new corporate partners who share in the vision of investing in DC's cultural traditions and history.

Go-Go Media Preservation Fund: Every thriving music scene has a thriving arts media community that supports it and helps spread the message. If the goal of this legislation is to uplift Go-Go the Council should consider taking action to uplift local media that covers Go-Go. This support could include stipends for local print and online media journalists who write about and cover Go-Go, support for photographers, podcasters, videographers, sound recorders who document and record live Go-Go performances and finally support for radio programs and stations online or on traditional formats that specialize in Go-Go. The DMV has its own 24 Hour Go-Go Radio station, Go-Go Radio Live has been operating for close to a decade covering Go-Go Music and Go-Go bands 24/7. This legislation should aim to help media outlets like Go-Go Radio move back into the district with some resources to become a premiere outlet to support DC's historic local artform.

The city currently spends a very large amount of money on our city run media outlets. A successful media landscape is one that is diversified and supports original programming and ideas in the spaces where they exist. If just a portion of the resources being used for city owned media outlets could be diverted to support independent programming that could have an enormous impact on the arts community as a whole.

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For years before the Don't Mute DC Movement we have been hearing from members of the Go-Go community about the need to create a real Go Go Archive to preserve the history through recordings, video, pictures, posters and more. While DC Public Library has already started the process of launching an official city archives there is still an incredible amount of funding needed to properly document decades of music history. The members of the Dont Mute DC Movement have already shared some of their thoughts on how archival funding should be

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CONCLUSION

Go-Go is synonymous with DC Culture and Music and should be celebrated as such. Go-Go is the movement and the pulse that echoes throughout all streets and wards of this city. This is a genre that the entire world should know. The fact that the Council is willing to take the time to

honor this genre as the official music of DC is commendable, however, after decades of being disrespected and degraded by politicians, law enforcement, and larger local institutions, it is time to give this genre the true credit it deserves. That credit involved more than just an official recognition, it involves a well thought out inclusive piece of legislation that will fund the current movement, future success, and historic preservation of essential DC Culture. We urge the council to do the right thing, go back to the drawing board and make sure you all include as many different avenues for funding in this legislation as possible.

Thank you for your time,

Christopher Naoum, Co-Founder Listen Local First DC
Graham Smith-White, Owner - The Infinite Goodness LLC
Julianne Brienza, Founding Director Capital Fringe
Diana Ezerins, Kennedy Center Millennium Stage
Sandra Basanti, Dangerously Delicious DC LLC
Molly Ruland, Heartcast Media
Katea Stitt, Interim Program Director, WPFW
Joe Lapan, Owner Songbyrd Music House
Kokayi, Less Talk More Walk LLC
Jennifer Langer, ECE (EastCoast Entertainment- DC)
Dior Ashley Brown, Founder of DC Music Summit
Aaron Myers, Capitol Hill Jazz Foundation
Herb Scott, Capitol Hill Jazz Foundation
Elijah Jamal Balbed, Jazz & Go-Go Musician
Tone P, Don't Mute DC
Angela Byrd, CEO of MadelIntheDMV
Sara Curtin, musician

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office Of Cable Television, Film, Music, And Entertainment**



**Public Hearing on
Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation
Act of 2019”**

Testimony of
Angie M. Gates
Director

Before the
Committee of the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 500
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
4:00pm

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee of the Whole, and staff. I am Angie Gates, the Director of the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment (OCTFME). I am pleased to provide testimony supporting Bill 23-317, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019.”

If enacted, this legislation would designate Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia. It would also ensure that Go-Go always has a home in DC by creating a program to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history.

Go-Go started in the mid ‘60’s and ‘70’s as a term for a club where young people would unite in their love for music. Today, after decades of providing the sound of the city, it has been transformed into a movement of beats, culture, and activism.

A young musical pioneer named Chuck Brown began laying the foundation for a new and innovative sound in the District of Columbia in the ‘70’s. Since its inception, Go-Go has defined musical culture in the District of Columbia in a way that cannot be compared to any other city in the nation. With its conga beats and other percussion sounds mixed in with Blues, Salsa, R&B, Hip-Hop, and other genres, Go-Go continues to have a historic mark on the nation’s capital. It has been the soundtrack for the lives of District residents for decades.

Go-Go has not been limited to the Billboard charts. Thanks to award-winning director Spike Lee and his ground-breaking film, *School Daze*, Go-Go has also made it onto the “silver screen.” A scene from that film was captured right here in D.C. with the band “Experience Unlimited,” known as E.U. featuring Sugar Bear, on the stage of the 9:30 Club. Collaborations with musicians such as Jill Scott, Salt-N-Pepa, and Kid-N-Play have propelled Go-Go into the international spotlight taking its unique sound beyond our eight wards. Go-Go is not just music.

It is an experience that is woven into the history of D.C. It is the common thread that connects generation after generation.

It is no wonder that when the very existence of Go-Go has been put to the test in recent years, the community pushed back. More than 80 thousand supporters signed a petition under the hashtag “#Don’tMuteDC” in order to keep the sound of Go-Go alive. Thousands of artists, advocates and music lovers took to the streets to voice their support for Go-Go. The momentum from the Go-Go community has also been at the forefront of the movement to support DC becoming the 51st state, by lifting up our values and defining the very essence of what it means to be a Washingtonian.

At OCTFME, we value the contributions that Go-Go music has made to the District. In September 2018, our agency premiered *Straight Crankin’—A Go-Go Documentary*, which was produced by our Emmy award winning team. The film, featuring band members from past and present, highlights Go-Go's evolution from its roots to the “bounce beat” and its global impact. Year after year, several artists have taken “center stage” during OCTFME events, such as Rare Essence and Be’la Dona entertaining friends and neighbors on Freedom Plaza during the District’s Emancipation Day Celebration. Most recently, the Black Alley Band performed during Mayor Bowser’s 2022 Kickoff event.

In addition, OCTFME has highlighted Go-Go through DC Radio and special programming on the District of Columbia Network (DCN) and District Knowledge Network (DKN). On DCN, we highlight Go-Go videos on the program “Display” and open our studios for interviews and performances on our show, “The 202.” On DKN, we feature “Learning with Go-Go” for our youth.

OCTFME will always support the Go-Go community in D.C. It is for these reasons that we support Bill B23-317. To properly archive Go-Go music and documents referenced in the bill, independent resources and infrastructure will be required. We are dedicated to doing our part to ensure that the tradition and culture of Go-Go continues to thrive and live on for generations to come.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank Mayor Muriel Bowser for her commitment to Go-Go music and ensuring that Go-Go remains a vibrant part of DC's culture, and the members of the Council for their partnership in this effort. I'd also like to thank the DC community for all that it does to keep the culture of the District alive through the sounds and the rhythm of Go-Go music. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

§ 47–2820. Theaters, moving pictures, skating rinks, dances, exhibitions, lectures, entertainments; assignment of police and firemen and additional fees based thereon; hours minors are prohibited on premises.

(a) Owners or managers of theaters in which moving pictures are displayed, for profit or gain, shall pay a license fee of \$830 biennially.

(b) Owners or managers of buildings in which skating rinks, fairs, carnivals, balls, dances, exhibitions, lectures, or entertainments of any description including theatrical or dramatic performances of any kind are conducted, for profit or gain, shall pay a license fee of \$500 per annum; provided, that for entertainments, concerts, or performances of any kind where the proceeds are intended for church or charitable purposes, and where no rental is charged, no license shall be required; provided further, that when, in the opinion of the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief of the District of Columbia, or either of them, it is necessary to post policemen or firemen, or both, at, on, and about the licensed premises for the protection of the public safety, in addition to the license fee provided for above, such owners or managers shall pay a further monthly permit fee, to be determined monthly by the said Chief of Police and Fire Chief, or either of them, based upon a reasonable estimate of the number of hours to be spent by policemen and firemen at, on, and about the licensed premises, this fee to be payable in advance on the first day of the month for which the permit is sought. Policemen and firemen so assigned shall be charged for by the hour at the basic daily wage rate of policemen and firemen so assigned in effect the first day of the month for which the permit is sought.

(b-1)(1)(A) Before granting or renewing a license under subsection (b) of this section, the Mayor shall give 30-days notice by mail to the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission and by publication in the District of Columbia Register. The notice shall contain the name of the applicant and a description, by street and number, or other plain designation, of the particular location for which the license is requested. The notice shall state that any resident or owner of residential property within 600 feet of the boundary lines of the lot upon which is situated the establishment for which the license is requested who objects to the granting of the license is entitled to be heard before the granting or renewal of the license and shall name the time and place of the hearing.

(B) The applicant shall post 2 notices for a period of 4 weeks in conspicuous places on the outside of the premises. The notices to be posted shall state that any resident or owner of residential property within 600 feet of the boundary lines of the lot upon which is situated the establishment for which the license is requested who objects to the license is entitled to be heard before the granting or renewal of the license and shall name the same time and place for the hearing as set out in the notice mailed and published by the Mayor.

(C) If an objection to the granting or renewal of the license is filed, no final action shall be taken by the Mayor until the resident or owner of residential property within

600 feet of the boundary lines of the lot upon which is situated the establishment for which the license is requested who objects has an opportunity to be heard, under the rules and regulations to be issued by the Mayor.

(2) Upon objection, a hearing shall be held by the Mayor to determine the following:

(A) The effect of the establishment on the peace, order, and quiet of the neighborhood or portion of the District of Columbia; and

(B) The effect of the establishment on the residential parking needs and vehicular and pedestrian safety of the neighborhood.

(3) The Mayor shall rule on the application within 30 days of the hearing.

(4) The license shall be renewed annually.

(b-2) Any applicant who holds a valid class C or D license issued pursuant to Chapter 1 of Title 25 and who holds a certificate of occupancy for less than 401 persons shall be exempt from the provisions of subsection (b)(1) of this section.

~~(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, after 11:30 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays except days preceding holidays and after 1:00 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays until 8:00 a.m. of each day, owners or managers of facilities licensed under the provisions of this section shall not permit any minor to be present on the licensed premises.~~

~~(2) Paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not apply to owners or managers:~~

~~(A) Of theaters when displaying moving pictures; or~~

~~(B) Of buildings in which fairs, carnivals, exhibitions, lectures, and theatrical or dramatic performances are being conducted.~~

~~(d) The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs shall suspend the license of any licensee determined to have violated the provisions of subsection (c) of this section. The period of suspension shall not exceed 1 year for each violation. A licensee alleged to be in violation shall be entitled to a hearing in accordance with § 1-1509.~~

(e) Any license issued pursuant to this section shall be issued as an Entertainment endorsement to a basic business license under the basic business license system as set forth in subchapter I-A of this chapter.

1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**
2 **Committee of the Whole**
3 **December 17, 2019**

4
5 A BILL

6
7 23-317
8

9
10 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
11
12 _____
13

14 To designate Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia, and to require the
15 Mayor to create a plan to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history.
16

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
18 act may be cited as the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of
19 2019”.

20 Sec. 2. (a) Go-Go music originated in the District of Columbia during the mid-1960s to
21 late 1970s.

22 (b) Initially, Go-Go was the term used to identify a music club where young people
23 gathered, where between songs the percussion section of the band would continue to play while
24 the band leader engaged the audience through melodic call and response sessions.

25 (c) Go-Go is a fusion of musical forms, drawing inspiration from funk, blues, soul, and
26 salsa, blending them seamlessly with its syncopated polyrhythms and multiple percussion
27 instruments.

28 (d) During the 1980s, the Department of Parks and Recreation “Munch for Lunch”
29 program used its Showmobile, a stage on wheels, to provide free Go-Go concerts in various
30 locations several times a week for lunchtime crowds to enjoy.

31 (e) The 1987 hit “Da Butt” by Chuck Brown, known as the Godfather of Go-Go, and the
32 group Experience Unlimited, also known as E.U., on the soundtrack for Spike Lee’s film School
33 Daze helped bring Go-Go to a national stage.

34 (f) Many local residents who went on to join groups such as Rare Essence, Trouble Funk,
35 Junkyard Band, Backyard Band, TCB, TOB, and Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers gained
36 their musical experience in District public school marching bands.

37 (g) Go-Go music encapsulates the range of personal experiences in local communities
38 around the District and expresses them in a unifying force.

39 (h) Go-Go music is a multifaceted art form that fully captures the cultural and artistic
40 expressions of the District.

41 (i) Go-Go music is hereby designated the official music of the District of Columbia.

42 Sec. 3. Within 240 days of the effective date of this act, the Mayor shall create and
43 submit to the Council a plan to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history
44 including responsibilities between the various District agencies including the Archives, the
45 Office of Cable Television, Film, and Music Entertainment, and the District of Columbia Public
46 Library.

47 Sec. 4. Subsections 47-2820(c) and 47-2820(d) of the District of Columbia Official Code
48 are repealed.

49 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

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

53 Sec. 6. Effective date.

54 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
55 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
56 provided in section 602(c)(2) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
57 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 788; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(2)), and publication in the District of
58 Columbia Register.