

Good morning Council Members. My name is James Nash, and I speak as a tax-payer who lives in Ward 4 and as a parishioner of St. Matthew's Cathedral where I have served in our homeless ministries program for many years.

I am opposed to Bill 23-316 primarily because I fear the Tax Revision Commission will delay or prevent what is most critical for the health of our community: raising taxes on the more wealthy members of our community so our city has the money to help those who are poorest.

I say this as a person who is relatively well-off. Please raise my taxes so we can end chronic homelessness and offer assistance to the many DC residents who are struggling because of the pandemic. The need is critical. I see it every Monday in the faces of the people we are serving at St. Matthew's. I take this position because of my Christian faith and because it is necessary to preserve my humanity when confronted with the overwhelming needs of the people we serve.

I also take this position because there is plenty of evidence that ending chronic homelessness will actually save the city money in the long run. A TRC filled with self-interested partisans, however, is unlikely to be open to this evidence. Instead, I believe the city should review its tax policy with the aid of independent non-partisan analysts who can make reasonable evidence-based recommendations that will restore equity to our tax system, preserve our city's fiscal integrity and address the fallout from the pandemic.

We are facing big increases in unemployment, mass evictions, and therefore big increases in our homeless population. We need to be ready for bold, swift and smart responses to these many problems.

I will say it one more time: please raise my taxes to help the most vulnerable members of our community. Do not plug up our system with needless commissions.