



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING  
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

November 17, 2021

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor, District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

RE: COVID-19 Indoor Mask Mandate

Dear Mayor Bowser,

Yesterday, alongside the Director of the Department of Health, you announced that the District would drop its indoor mask mandate. We are concerned that this decision would place the District ahead of the science, including continuing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control that still recommends that masking indoors is the safest way to protect everyone from COVID-19 exposure. Even the White House will maintain its mandate. We urge you to reverse your decision to drop the mask mandate.

As you know, children over five years old were only able to get a vaccine beginning on November 2<sup>nd</sup> – barely two weeks ago. Those children will not be eligible for their second dose until three weeks after the first – and won't be considered fully vaccinated until another two weeks after that. Moreover, children under five are still not eligible for vaccination. While they may be a "small portion of the population," they are one of the hardest to protect not having access to a vaccine.

We are concerned that changing course entering the Winter months, not to mention the week before a major travel holiday, is not a prudent course of action. It sends a signal that public health concerns are back to normal when they are not. Our focus should be on getting every eligible person vaccinated, not gambling with the safety of the most vulnerable. We should not follow the example of Montgomery County which imposed, retracted, then reimposed a mask mandate causing whiplash-like confusion for residents. Our businesses also crave consistency. If the desire is for a more flexible policy for businesses, for example a gym, then we should look at surgical approaches to loosening the mandate in certain circumstances.

To date, the District, under our collective leadership, has been appropriately thoughtful, careful, and protective of our residents – this approach should continue. We implore you to pause your plan to drop the mask mandate and follow federal guidance when it comes to COVID-19 mitigation and masking. We also ask that you join the weekly Council-Executive call this Friday so we may further discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

Anita Bonds  
Councilmember, At-Large

Elissa Silverman  
Councilmember, At-Large

Phil Mendelson  
Chairman

Robert C. White, Jr.  
Councilmember, At-Large





Brianne Nadeau  
Councilmember, Ward 1



Mary M. Cheh  
Councilmember, Ward 3



Janeese Lewis George  
Councilmember, Ward 4



Kenyan McDuffie  
Councilmember, Ward 5



Vincent C. Gray  
Councilmember, Ward 7



Trayon White, Sr.  
Councilmember, Ward 8