

**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: July 11, 2023

SUBJECT: Report on PR 25-264, “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023”

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 25-264, the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023” was referred, reports favorably thereon with technical amendments, and recommends approval by the Council.

CONTENTS

I.	Background And Need.....	1
II.	Legislative Chronology.....	3
III.	Position Of The Executive.....	4
IV.	Comments Of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions	4
V.	Summary Of Testimony.....	4
VI.	Impact On Existing Law	4
VII.	Fiscal Impact.....	4
VIII.	Section-By-Section Analysis	4
IX.	Committee Action.....	5
X.	Attachments	5

I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

On June 7, 2023, Proposed Resolution 25-264, the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023,” was introduced by Chairman Phil Mendelson at the request of the Mayor. PR 25-264 would confirm the Mayor’s nomination of Ms. Carla Sims for reappointment as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities for a three-year term to end June 30, 2026.

Ms. Sims is a Ward 6 resident. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Hampton University and a Certificate of Special Studies in Administration and Management from the Extension School at Harvard University. Currently, she owns and operates FYIMG, Inc., an entertainment and production company. Ms. Sims also has served as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves and worked in the Pentagon as the Special Assistant for External Affairs to the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In this position, she facilitated national

speaking and outreach opportunities to promote new ways for communities, institutions, and organizations to view the Department of Defense. Ms. Sims was a founding board member of Howard Theater Restoration and sat on the board of Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC.

The Commission on the Arts and Humanities (Commission) was established by the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-201 *et seq.*). The Commission is now an independent agency within the District government¹ and is designated by the National Endowment for the Arts as the state arts agency for the District of Columbia. Its role is to evaluate and initiate action on matters relating to the arts and humanities and to encourage programs and the development of programs that promote progress in the arts and humanities.²

The Commission consists of 14 members appointed by the Mayor for three-year term, with the advice and consent of the Council.³ The Commission is tasked with appointing an Executive Director who serves as the chief administrative officer of the Commission.⁴ In addition, the mission of the Commission is to provide grants, programs, and educational activities that encourage diverse artistic expressions and learning opportunities so that all District of Columbia residents and visitors can experience the District's rich arts and humanities community.⁵

Members of the Commission must be District residents and must have displayed an interest or an ability in the arts and humanities or must be active in the furtherance of the arts or humanities.⁶ Moreover, the Mayor has to give due consideration to recommendations made by the arts and humanities community, and has to ensure that there is reasonable representation of all the wards in the District when considering appointments to the Commission.⁷ Further, no employee of the District government can serve as a member of the Commission.⁸

In the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Support Act of 2019,⁹ the Council approved additional requirements for individuals to be eligible to serve on the Commission. By July 1, 2019, six of the 18 members appointed to the Commission are required to meet the following requirements: (1) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities; (2) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in arts or humanities education; and (3) two members

¹ The Commission became an independent agency on July 22, 2019. *See* section 2204 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Independence and Funding Restructuring Amendment Act of 2019, effective September 11, 2019 (D.C. Law 23-16; 66 DCR 9621). *See also* the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Budget Subtitle Technical Emergency Amendment Act of 2019, effective October 20, 2019 (D.C. Act 23-129; 66 DCR 14808); and the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Budget Subtitle Technical Temporary Amendment Act of 2019, effective December 24, 2019 (D.C. law 23-39; 67 DCR 14816).

² D.C. Official Code § 39-203(a).

³ D.C. Official Code § 39-203.

⁴ D.C. Official Code § 39-205.

⁵ Commission on the Arts and Humanities - About CAH, <https://dcarts.dc.gov/page/about-cah> (last visited January 11, 2020).

⁶ *Supra* note 4.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Effective September 11, 2019 (D.C. Law 23-16; D.C. Code § 39-201 *et seq.*).

with specific interest, ability, or experience in theatre and performing arts.¹⁰ By July 1, 2020, four of the 18 members appointed to the Commission are required to meet the following requirements: (1) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in public art; and (2) two members with specific experience in arts or humanities organizational administration or governance.¹¹

Table 1: Membership of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities

*****An updated membership listing will be included once received from the Mayor’s Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA)*****

If reappointed, Ms. Sims plans to continue to assist the Commission in further strengthening the District’s artistic community through active service. During her tenure, she actively served on the Public Arts Committee and the Finance Committee and been a reviewer on numerous grant panels. Ms. Sims notes that she will continue to dedicate herself wholeheartedly to nurturing the District’s vibrant cultural ecosystem, enriching the community through the transformative power of art, and striving to ensure that art remains accessible, diverse, and significant. She expressed pride in the notable strides the Commission has made in the three years she has participated, including expanded outreach and engagement with communities that had been previously underrepresented in the city's cultural tapestry.

Ms. Sims meets the requirements to serve as a member of the Commission pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 39-203(a-1)(2)(C) as he has a specific interest, ability, and experience in theatre and performing arts. The Committee believes Ms. Sims years of involvement in the arts attests to her ability to serve on the Commission. The Committee recommends adoption of PR 25-264.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

June 7, 2023	PR 25-264, the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023” is introduced by Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor.
June 16, 2023	Notice of Intent to Act on PR 25-264 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
June 20, 2023	PR 25-264 is “read” at the June 20, 2023 Legislative meeting; on this date the referral of the PR to the Committee of the Whole is official and the 90-day period for Council review begins.
June 23, 2023	Notice of Public Hearing on PR 25-264 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> .
June 30, 2023	The Committee of the Whole holds a public hearing on PR 25-264.

¹⁰ *Supra* note 4.

¹¹ *Id.*

July 11, 2023 The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 25-264.

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ms. Carla Sims is the Mayor's nomination for appointment to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on PR 25-264.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public roundtable hearing on PR 25-264 on Friday, June 30, 2023. The testimony summarized below, and attached, is from the portion of the hearing pertaining to Ms. Sims.

Carla Sims, Nominee, testified and answered questions from Chairman Mendelson regarding her background and experience as it pertains to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities and her interest in serving on the Commission.

The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to Ms. Sims' appointment.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Members of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities are appointed pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203).

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

PR 25-264 will have no fiscal impact on the District of Columbia budget or financial plan. Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 39-203(e), members of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities do not receive compensation.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 States the short title of Proposed Resolution 25-264.

- Section 2 Confirms the reappointment of Carla Sims as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities for a three-year term to end June 30, 2026.
- Section 3 Requires that a copy of the resolution, upon adoption, be transmitted to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.
- Section 4 Provides that the resolution will take effect once approved by the Council.

IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. PR 25-264 as introduced.
2. Nominee's response to Committee questions.
3. Written testimony.
4. Legal Sufficiency Determination.
5. Committee Print for PR 25-264.



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

June 7, 2023

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

In accordance with section 2 of the Confirmation Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-142; D.C. Official Code § 1-523.01), and pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), I am pleased to nominate the following person:

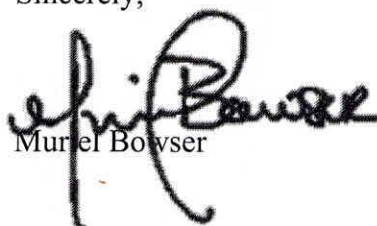
Ms. Carla Sims
Constitution Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(Ward 6)

for reappointment as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, for a term ending June 30, 2026.

Enclosed you will find biographical information detailing the experience of Ms. Sims, together with a proposed resolution to assist the Council during the confirmation process.

I would appreciate the Council's earliest consideration of this nomination for confirmation. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Steven Walker, Director, Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments, should the Council require additional information.

Sincerely,


Muriel Bowser



Chairman Phil Mendelson
at the request of the Mayor

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To confirm the reappointment of Ms. Carla Sims to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the reappointment of:

Ms. Carla Sims
Constitution Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(Ward 6)

as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, established by section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), for a term ending June 30, 2026.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution, upon its adoption, to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.



Carla Lachele Sims

Carla Sims is a three-time Grammy Award-winning producer, strategic communications expert with over 30 years of results-oriented experience in marketing, communications, project management, media-relations, branding, and event, film and television production. Her experience developing integrated communications campaigns for entertainment, corporate, nonprofit and government clients gives her a unique perspective on building and managing the brands of products, institutions and cultural icons.

In 2006, Ms. Sims left her position as Senior Vice President at Fleishman-Hillard International Communications, one of the world's largest public relations agencies, to start FYIMG, LLC, an entertainment and production company in partnership with her husband, jazz harmonicist Frederic Yonnet.

With comedian Dave Chappelle as her first client, Ms. Sims had the formidable task of repositioning him following his abrupt departure from his hit television show, *The Chappelle Show* on Comedy Central. Her strategic approach and selective placements helped to elevate Chappelle's status to the cultural and generational icon he is today. Sims received Grammy Awards for her role as Consulting Producer of Chappelle's long-awaited double-albums: *The Art of Spin* and *Deep in the Heart of Texas* (2017); *Equanimity* and *The Bird Revelation* (2018); and *Sticks and Stones* (2019).

As publicist and producing partner for Chappelle, she developed Dave Chappelle's *Juke Joint* featuring Frederic Yonnet. The live music and comedy show, which showcases Yonnet and his "Band with No Name," has been described as "the best party you've never been to," and the next iteration of Chappelle's *Block Party*, a music documentary directed by Michel Gondry. As strategic communications advisor and spokesperson, she evaluates all incoming media, public appearance and special requests. She coordinates appearances and cover story placements in national and international outlets. Her personal relationships with artists, managers and agents give her direct access to celebrities and industry influencers.

During her eight-year tenure at Fleishman, Ms. Sims managed multimillion-dollar programs for corporate and government clients including the Department of the Army, ESPN, Inc., The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), National Public Radio, the Social Security Administration, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. As head of Multicultural Outreach on the ONDCP account, she managed part of a \$50 million budget and supervised subcontractors to reach youth and parents in the African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities. As the lead on the Army's multi-year, multimillion-dollar *Operation Tribute to Freedom* project, Ms. Sims and her team created hundreds of high-profile opportunities for the American public to thank returning soldiers for their service. Other entertainment and sports-related experience includes working in the Sports Marketing Department at Anheuser-Busch and working with Ann Marie Wilkins, artist manager for Branford Marsalis and Harry Connick, Jr.

Ms. Sims served as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves and worked in the Pentagon as the Special Assistant for External Affairs to the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In this position, she facilitated national speaking and outreach opportunities to promote new ways for communities, institutions, and organizations to view the Department of Defense. Her last Pentagon assignment was in the Community Relations Division, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Her various professional experiences and personal interests, ranging from sports and entertainment to national and community service, enable her to operate comfortably and effectively serve clients in a wide variety of worlds.

Ms. Sims was a founding board member of Howard Theater Restoration and sat on the board of Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington, DC. She received a B.A. in Mass Media Communications from Hampton University and a Certificate of Special Studies in Administration and Management from the Extension School at Harvard University.



Executive Office of the Mayor - Office of Talent and Appointments
John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 600 | Washington, DC 20004

Carla Sims



Carla Sims is a three-time Grammy Award-winning producer, strategic communications expert with over 30 years of results-oriented experience in marketing, communications, project management, media relations, branding, and event, film, and television production. Ms. Sims founded FYIMG, LLC, an entertainment and production company in partnership with her husband.

Ms. Sims served as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves and worked in the Pentagon as the Special Assistant for External Affairs to the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In this position, she facilitated national speaking and outreach opportunities to promote new ways for communities, institutions, and organizations to view the Department of Defense. Her last Pentagon assignment was in the Community Relations Division, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Her various professional experiences and personal interests, ranging from sports and entertainment to national and community service, enable her to operate comfortably and effectively serve clients in a wide variety of worlds.

Ms. Sims received a B.A. in Mass Media Communications from Hampton University and a Certificate of Special Studies in Administration and Management from the Extension School at Harvard University.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Executive Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser



Office of the General Counsel to the Mayor

To: Tommy Wells, Steve Walker
From: Betsy Cavendish
Date: March 6, 2023
Subject: Legal sufficiency review of Resolutions nominating Maggie Fitzpatrick, Cecily Habimana, Carla Sims, and Hector Torres as members of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities

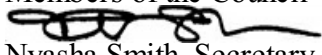
This is to Certify that this office has reviewed the above-referenced resolutions and found them to be legally unobjectionable. If you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to call Vanessa Careiro, Deputy General Counsel, Executive Office of the Mayor, at 202-724-1303, or me at 202-724-7681.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elizabeth A. Cavendish'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth A. (Betsy) Cavendish

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 : Thursday, June 8, 2023
Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Wednesday, June 07, 2023. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation Resolution of 2023", PR25-0264

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson, at the request of Mayor

The Chairman is referring this legislation to Committee of the Whole. This resolution will be deemed disapproved on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 without Council action.

Attachment
cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMISSION ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**



Public Roundtable
on
PR25-264, the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims Confirmation
Resolution of 2023”

Testimony of
Carla Sims

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

June 30, 2023
10:00am
Virtual Meeting Platform



Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, Councilmembers, and staff of the Committee of the Whole. I am deeply honored and humbled by the nomination for reappointment by Mayor Muriel Bowser to serve a second term as a Commissioner on the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today.

As a commissioner, I have actively served on the Public Arts Committee and the Finance Committee and been a reviewer on numerous grant panels. I present myself to you not as an individual but as a representative of a collective that is passionate, dedicated, and committed to the arts and humanities in this City. My nomination for reappointment is a testament to the hard work and achievements of everyone involved in the Commission, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the exceptional leadership of Commission Chairman Reggie Van Lee, our recently appointed Executive Director Aaron Myers, Deputy Director David Markey, and all the other commissioners and staff who serve at the Commission.

As an ardent admirer and enthusiast of arts and culture, my journey has been marked by consistent engagement with the arts —both in my personal life and professional career. I'm married to a creative-jazz harmonicist Frederic Yonnet; I work for creatives, including Erykah Badu, Naomi Campbell, and DC native Dave Chappelle; and when I want to be enriched, I enjoy the work of creatives.

I'm an advocate for artistic freedom and expression and have been involved in numerous events, productions, and public art initiatives that have put the local and national spotlight on DC, including the creation of the Mayor's Black Lives Matter Plaza and the 51st State



murals. I've also produced and consulted on three Netflix specials filmed in DC and received three Grammy Awards. I have collaborated with grassroots arts organizations, produced cultural events, and advocated for policies promoting art in education. It is this experience and insight that I bring to the Commission.

When I first took on this role in 2020, I promised to dedicate myself wholeheartedly to nurturing our vibrant cultural ecosystem, enriching our community through the transformative power of art, and striving to ensure that art remains accessible, diverse, and significant. Looking back at our journey, I am proud to say that together we have turned these commitments into tangible realities.

In the past three years, the Commission has made notable strides in various areas. We expanded our outreach, engaging with communities that had been previously underrepresented in our city's cultural tapestry. From Anacostia to Georgetown, from Capitol Hill to Columbia Heights, we have celebrated the rich diversity of the District and amplified voices that needed to be heard. Our emphasis on inclusion has not only led to a richer cultural environment but also fostered understanding and unity among our various communities.

Moreover, in the face of the global challenges that marked the years 2020–2022, our Commission remained steadfast, resilient, and creative. We leveraged the power of art to provide comfort, encourage dialogue, and foster resilience during what continue to be pretty tough times for many. The implementation of virtual exhibitions and digital art education programs ensured that our commitment to accessible art remained unwavering despite the physical barriers.



I am especially proud of our successful initiatives to support local artists who were heavily impacted by these global events. The emergency grant program we implemented has supported hundreds of artists and cultural organizations, providing much-needed assistance in a time of crisis. This critical relief effort underlined the value we place on our artists and their significant contributions to the fabric of our society.

As we look forward, I am excited about the prospect of continuing this journey. I see a future where the District of Columbia's arts and humanities scene flourishes even more, where art continues to unite us, challenge us, and inspire us.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and the trust you have placed in me. It is an honor to serve our city, our artists, and our communities. If re-confirmed, I promise to continue advocating for the arts, empowering our artists, and inspiring our community with the same passion and commitment that have defined my term so far.

Thank you for considering my reappointment. Together, let us continue to shape our city into a vibrant and inclusive cultural hub. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**

2 Committee of the Whole

3 July 11, 2023

4
5
6
7 **A PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

8
9 25-264

10
11 **IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

12
13
14
15
16 To confirm the reappointment of Ms. Carla Sims to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

17
18 **RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this**
19 resolution may be cited as the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Carla Sims
20 Confirmation Resolution of 2023”.

21
22 **Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the reappointment of:**

23 **Ms. Carla Sims**
24 **Constitution Avenue, NE**
25 **Washington, D.C. 20002**
26 **(Ward 6)**

27
28 as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, established by section 4 of the
29 Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C.
30 Official Code § 39-203), for a term ending June 30, 2026.

31 **Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,**
32 **upon its adoption, to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.**

33 **Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.**