



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN MENDELSON
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday November 4, 2021

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**CHAIRMAN MENDELSON STATEMENT ON
DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS AT THE DISTRICT'S JAIL**

WASHINGTON, DC – DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson released the following statement regarding this week's findings about the DC Jail:

"What has happened at the DC Jail is a direct reflection on the Mayor's failure to pursue opportunities to build a new facility, despite numerous methods to do so. What the US Marshalls reported this week is hardly news to anyone who knows the Jail.

"In 2015, the Washington Lawyer's Committee released a report on the conditions at the DC Jail and noted that inspectors found "openings in the wall" of several cells, "damaged concrete in several of the cell blocks," "water penetration through the walls," mold growth, and a leaking roof. In addition, inspectors have noted that "most of the plumbing fixtures were in different stages of disrepair."

"In 2014, I marked up legislation to create an Office of Public Private Partnerships – introduced by then-Councilmember Bowser – to allow the District to partner with the private sector to build innovative public infrastructure. Always present in those discussions was the possibility of using such financing to finally build a new Jail, leveraging private investment.

"In 2017, Mayor Bowser's team admitted that the Mayor's new the Office of Public-Private Partnerships, created by that legislation, actually received four private sector proposals to build a new DC Jail. All were reviewed and dismissed by the Bowser administration. This office has failed to deliver on any meaningful infrastructure in its six years of existence.

"The District must finally address the deplorable conditions at the DC Jail and build a new facility that lives up to our values. Incarcerated individuals in the District deserve dignity while in the District's care, and, at a minimum, deserve to be in this city as they await trial or sentencing.

"I call on the Mayor to finally provide a meaningful investment in a new DC Jail. The Mayor must work to create a plan, backed up by financing, to save our public safety system from further self-inflicted embarrassment."