

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

FROM: Phil Mendelson, Chairman 

DATE: May 2, 2024

RE: **Request to Place Motion to Override the Mayoral Vetoes on the Agenda for the May 7, 2024 Legislative Meeting**

Pursuant to Council Rule 429(5), this is a request that the following measures be placed on the agenda as new business for the May 7, 2024 Legislative Meeting:

- **Motion to Override the Mayoral Veto of Bill 25-780, the “Local Rent Supplement Program Eligibility Emergency Amendment Act of 2024”**

On April 2, 2024, the Council approved Bill 25-780, the “Local Rent Supplement Program Eligibility Emergency Amendment Act of 2024.” The purpose of Bill 25-780 is to allow applicants for local, tenant-based, sponsor-based, and project-based vouchers to self-certify eligibility factors such as income if the applicant cannot easily obtain documentation, and to prohibit the Housing Authority from inquiring into an applicant’s immigration status, prior criminal arrests or convictions, or pending criminal matters, for the purposes of determining eligibility to receive a voucher. Bill 25-780 is the third iteration of emergency measures on this issue, as the Council is continuing to work on a permanent version of the bill.

In her veto message, the Mayor asserts that the self-certification process “impugns” the ability of the Housing Authority to do due diligence on applicants. This is simply false. The legislation allows for self-certification only “when an applicant cannot easily obtain verification documents.” As we’ve seen and heard from countless stakeholders, the process for obtaining verification documents, particularly for homeless individuals, can take months or even years. Allowing for self-certification in circumstances where these individuals do not have immediate access to the required documentation ensures that they do not remain homeless due to bureaucratic processes. The Mayor also claims that the law creates a “security threat” to District residents by precluding the Authority from considering prior arrests or convictions when determining eligibility. This provision is meant to ensure that criminal records are not a barrier to getting people housed, and the Mayor did not cite any data, statistics or even anecdotes to support the contention that this law impacts the safety of District residents.

Copies of the measures are attached. Please call me or Blaine Stum if you have any questions at (202) 724-8092.

cc: All Councilmembers
Council Officers