



Volume 03 | March 2017



Robert White At Large



@RobertWhite\_DC



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Hello, friend,

Since I began my term as an At-Large Councilmember, I have been focusing on bridging the gaps for residents who are being left behind. Much of our economic inequality results from an educational disparity that has plagued our city for decades. I hope to reverse this trend starting with early childhood development, adult education, and special education.

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## EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE



*Councilmember Robert White (Left) listens intently to suggestions from one of the over forty childhood development providers at the Petworth Library.*

On March 1, I released my Transition Report to detail my legislative agenda. Days later, I began working to unravel the early childhood development crisis in the District. As a new father, I have been astounded by how much my infant daughter, Madison, learns each day. Watching her grow in her first months made me realize how vital the early months and years are for our children's development, and that if we are going to cut away at the enormous academic achievement gap and meet parents' need in the midst of a baby boom, we need to invest more in our children's most critical learning years.

***In the District, the average cost of child care is over \$1,800 a month, yet the average childcare worker makes only \$26,000 per year. Additionally, there are over 22,000 children under the age of three, but only enough spaces at licensed child development centers for one-third of our children.***

The high cost and limited access to quality child care results in children being left behind developmentally before their first day of school and high stress for parents competing for slots. To address this issue, I conducted months of research with the help of my Transition Committee and recently met with over 40 child development providers from across the city to get their feedback. The meeting lasted over two hours as we talked candidly about what needs to be done to expand access to quality child care. The issue is incredibly complex, so I've taken their feedback and will release a series of solutions in the coming weeks.

## CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY



counter-clockwise from top: engaging with student advocates from Capitol Hill Montessori school | checking in on students and staff at Savoy Elementary School | advocating for returning citizens at the DC Prisoner and Reentry Symposium | interacting with students at Walker-Jones Education Campus for National School Breakfast Week

Since I took office, my team and I have connected with hundreds of residents. Here are a few highlights from our community involvement over the past month:

- Met with six student advocates from Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan who wrote me a letter about keeping their school safe and clean. I spoke from the dais during the Council's performance oversight hearings about their school's lead issue.
- Spoke to journalists from around the country, encouraging them to change the prism of how the media covers affordable housing with the help of Make Room USA.
- Visited Savoy Elementary School in Ward 8 when students and staff returned to their building to make sure our scholars were receiving a safe, quality education, and to check in with teachers and staff.
- Advocated for returning citizens at the 2017 DC Prisoner and Reentry Symposium to describe the hurdles they face when they return home and when they try to re-enter the workforce. I spoke alongside Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Councilmember Charles Allen.
- Visited the Walker-Jones Education Campus in Ward 1 to see how DC Central Kitchen feeds our young scholars and educates them on healthy lifestyles.

## A LOOK AT LEGISLATION

Over the past month, I've worked with my Council colleagues on legislation to promote fair elections, speed up the sales of vacant and blighted homes, spur retirement savings for District employees, and ensure that developers build large enough apartments for families.

### CO-INTRODUCED

#### **Citizens Fair Election Program Amendment Act of 2017**

This bill allows qualified people who don't have significant monetary resources within their social circles to still run for public office while enhancing the impact of small-dollar donors in elections.

#### **Property Disposition Reform Amendment Act of 2018**

This bill allows real estate professionals to help the DC government turn vacant and blighted houses into workforce housing instead of sitting vacant for years.

#### **Retirement Parity Amendment Act of 2017**

This bill helps DC government employees save for retirement by creating a program that matches employee retirement contributions.

### CO-SPONSORED

#### **Family Unit Amendment Act of 2017**

This bill stimulates the building of affordable three and four-bedroom homes in response to the need for family-sized housing.

## FIND US IN THE COMMUNITY

If you would like to connect with my team and me, here are upcoming meetings where you can find us:

*\*Dates, times, and locations are subject to change.*

### **Monday, March 27:**

ANC 4B | 7:00 PM | 4th District Police Station | 6001 Georgia Avenue, NW

### **Thursday, March 30:**

Mayor Bowser's State of the District Address | 5:30 PM | University of the District of Columbia Theater of the Arts | 4200 Connecticut Ave, NW (Corner of Connecticut and Windom Place, NW)

### **Monday, April 3:**

ANC 8E | 7:00 PM | Eagle Academy | 3400 Wheeler Road, SE

### **Wednesday, April 5:**

ANC 1C | 7:00 PM | Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Health | 2355 Ontario Road, NW

### **Wednesday, April 5:**

ANC 3D | 7:00 PM | Wesley Theological Seminary, Elderdice Hall, Kresge Building | 4500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

### **Friday, April 7:**

Community Conversations with Councilmember Robert White | 2:00 - 5:00 PM | Denny's | 4445 Benning Road, NE

## IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER...

### OVERSIGHT OF OUR AGENCIES AND NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET



Every year from early February to late March, the Council conducts hearings to evaluate the performance of the nearly 100 District agencies. Soon we'll receive the Mayor's budget proposal, and then we'll hold hearings to evaluate it and produce a final DC Government budget.

**I encourage you to attend or testify at these hearings to help us understand what your community needs. You can find the budget hearings schedule at <https://goo.gl/7lom3q>.**

## NEED HELP?

### PLEASE CONTACT ME OR ANYONE ON MY TEAM

I hope you enjoyed this month's edition of my newsletter. If you have any questions or need to bring an issue to my attention, please call my office at 202-724-8174 or reach out to my team.

- **Robert White** | Councilmember | [rwhite@dccouncil.us](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.us)
- **Mtokufa Ngwenya** | Chief of Staff | [mngwenya@dccouncil.us](mailto:mngwenya@dccouncil.us)
- **Shawn Hilgendorf** | Legislative Director | [shilgendorf@dccouncil.us](mailto:shilgendorf@dccouncil.us)
- **Breanna Bledsoe** | Legislative Counsel | [bbledsoe@dccouncil.us](mailto:bbledsoe@dccouncil.us)
- **Luz E. Martínez** | Staff Assistant / Scheduler | [lmartinez@dccouncil.us](mailto:lmartinez@dccouncil.us)
- **Andre Strickland** | Constituent Services Coordinator | [astrickland@dccouncil.us](mailto:astrickland@dccouncil.us)
- **Daniel Wise** | Communications and Outreach Specialist | [dwise@dccouncil.us](mailto:dwise@dccouncil.us)

My Best,

Robert

