



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

AT-LARGE COUNCILMEMBER ROBERT C. WHITE, JR.

www.robertwhiteatlarge.com

A Letter from Councilmember White



Dear Neighbor,

As one of your at-large Councilmembers, I am grateful for the opportunity to meet, listen to and fight for residents in every ward. Because I believe that local government can make life better for more people, I champion programs and funding that tackle our city's deep-rooted issues.

Today, too many Washingtonians don't have faith in government; they feel ignored or left behind. When people put their trust in me to find solutions to issues impacting their everyday lives, I don't take that lightly. Over the past year, I've heard your deep concern about how hard it is to find affordable housing; the epidemic of gun violence and the need for new ideas on public safety; students and teachers dealing with hot classrooms and school maintenance issues; the urgent demand for climate action; fear of rolling back human rights and abortion access; and more. I have fought alongside DC neighbors and advocates to get things done in each of those areas.

In this annual report, I'll detail what my team and I accomplished on behalf of District residents in 2022. I hope you'll see the issues you care about reflected in our work.

My best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. White'.

Robert

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WORKING FOR & WITH DC RESIDENTS

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2022, my office...



Passed **14 emergency legislation packages.**



Completed **over 400 constituent service requests.**



Introduced **12 permanent bills.**



Passed **24 ceremonial resolutions** on topics from Transgender Day of Remembrance to Financial Literacy Month.

OUR CONSTITUENT SERVICES TEAM IN ACTION

From support to families navigating rapid rehousing to scheduling meal deliveries for housebound seniors, our constituent services team shows up with compassion, warmth, and expertise as they work with District residents. This year, my team closed over 400 requests for help from constituents, with a large concentration of cases involving the District's city services such as unfilled 311 requests, housing inspections, and senior services. My constituent services team is often the last line of defense for residents who have struggled to get issues resolved. Our impact can be seen in the ways DC residents' lives improve with help from our team and in the bigger push we're making every day to make the District government work better for Washingtonians.



I want to personally thank Councilmember Robert White for his continuous support. With the help of his office, my family was able to enjoy a decent Thanksgiving meal and much needed assistance in navigating the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) — I am very grateful! The community needs more people like Councilmember White and his team, who are willing to go above and beyond to see change in the community. I commend the work and look forward to helping him help others like myself be better and make change.” – **R. FLETCHER**

POLICY THAT MATTERS FOR DISTRICT RESIDENTS

One of my favorite parts of my job is being out in the community hearing from residents about the issues that matter and ways the DC government can help. My team and I speak with Washingtonians like you every day — whether we're joining Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) meetings, speaking with constituents on the phone, engaging with your messages on social media or just striking up a conversation walking down the street. Residents tell us about problems that make life harder or share ideas to make DC a safer, healthier, happier place that provides more people with the opportunity to thrive. With those challenges and ideas in mind, here are some actions my team took over the past year to meet District residents' needs:

Key to use for the following sections: * = bill introduced | ^L = signed into law

EDUCATION

Large opportunity gaps put many of our children of color at a disadvantage, even before they make it to their first day of elementary school. That is unacceptable to me, as both a father and a legislator. We need to level the playing field and provide all District children with care and compassion, teach them lifelong learning skills for them to flourish and make sure they are protected while at school.



DCDGS launches public dashboard for school work orders

BY MARIEL CARBONE

As chair of the Committee on Government Operations and Facilities in Council Period 24 (2021-2022), I had oversight over the Department of General Services (DGS), which maintains DC Public Schools (DCPS) buildings. Residents like you have tweeted, emailed my office or spoken with me out in the community about school facilities issues, and I've made close oversight of DGS a cornerstone of my committee work. DCPS

students, teachers, and administrators deserve safe and well-maintained school buildings. While we have more work to do to improve communication between DGS and DCPS and speed up school repairs, we significantly improved HVAC repairs and school readiness before students came back this fall. To get here, my team and I:

- Championed transparency for DCPS staff and parents by creating the first-ever public, online school work order [dashboard](#)^L that shows the status of most work orders at DCPS schools so school communities have more information about the status of school repairs.
- Visited DCPS campuses throughout the year on announced and unannounced visits and ramped up visits in the month before school reopening to hear from staff and administrators about maintenance issues and to track problems and monitor progress. Last year, I visited Hendley Elementary (Ward 8), LaSalle-Backus Elementary (Ward 4), Hyde-Addison Elementary (Ward 2), Plummer Elementary (Ward 7), McKinley Tech High (Ward 5), Roosevelt High/STAY (Ward 4), and Janney Elementary (Ward 3).
- Joined Council colleagues and the Mayor in investing \$60.3 million in capital funding for DCPS HVAC replacements over the next six years and an increase of over \$20 million to DGS's operating budget for schools.

- Partnered with Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Lewis George to develop their Back-to-School Safety Emergency Amendment Act of 2022, which addresses hot classrooms, school safety and COVID-19 preparedness.
- Used my position as chair to crowdsource the most urgent school building issues for the summer and worked with DGS to close gaps between its efforts and school community priorities.
- Held multiple hearings last school year with DGS leadership to examine what went wrong with school reopening last fall.
- Remained in close contact with DGS and DCPS throughout the year to fight for fixes to urgent school building issues we heard about from teachers and parents.

I thank DGS for its work to ensure classrooms were comfortable as students, teachers and staff returned for the new school year. At the same time, I am continuing to push for better systems and communication between DCPS and DGS because unacceptable maintenance issues remain unresolved for too long.

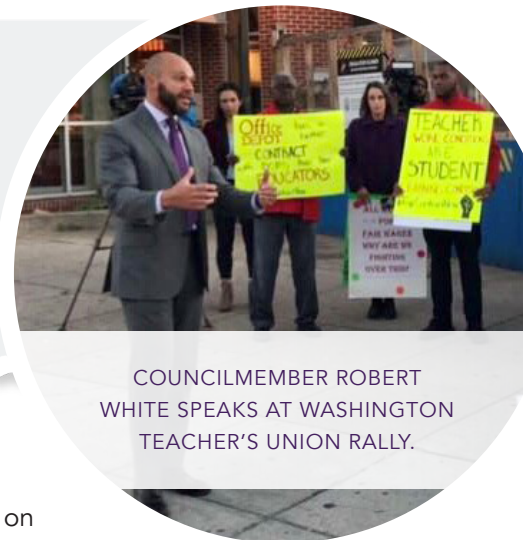


DC bill could provide free Master of Social Work degrees for residents

BY KIM JACKSON

The District is facing a mental health crisis. I've heard from countless residents about how challenging it is to find therapy or counseling — especially for people of color who are looking to work with a therapist who shares their identity. Acting on that need, I worked with our state school, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), to find a solution. In September, I introduced the [Pathways to Behavioral Health Degrees Act](#),* which will build the District's pipeline of behavioral health specialists by funding a Master of Social Work degree program at UDC and make it free for DC residents who have bachelor's degrees to attend with a scholarship covering tuition, books, and a monthly stipend for living expenses and transportation. I've heard from so many residents that this bill would be transformational for them personally as they seek career advancement and also for our schools and communities, which currently lack adequately trained mental health professionals to support children and adults coping with the trauma and stress of COVID-19, systemic racism, increasing expenses due to inflation, and the effects of gun violence.

Putting my commitment to teaching our students lifelong learning skills into action, I introduced the [Financial Literacy Education in Schools Amendment Act](#)* in 2021. I'm proud to report that Chairman Mendelson held a hearing on this bill in October 2022, where educators, students, and local credit unions and realtors' associations unanimously supported the idea. None of us instinctively know how to budget, invest, use credit and prepare financially for college, the workforce, or retirement. We all need someone who can provide that guidance. My goal with this legislation is to make sure DC students get that knowledge early on, while in the classroom, and to level the playing field for students who may not have trusted adults sharing financial tools with them. I will continue fighting alongside advocates to ensure students have access to financial literacy education to set them up for success in life.



COUNCILMEMBER ROBERT WHITE SPEAKS AT WASHINGTON TEACHER'S UNION RALLY.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- District residents who lost their jobs during the pandemic saw a negative impact on their credit, which, in turn, affected their ability to get approved for housing, secure a loan, and more. To remedy that, I introduced the [Public Health Emergency Credit Alert Amendment Act](#),* which allows residents who lost their jobs because of the pandemic to include a note on their credit report to give context to creditors and potential landlords. I successfully passed this idea into law temporarily. Now, I'm trying to make it permanent. The credit reporting agencies don't want to do this because it would be a burden on them, but I'm fighting to get this bill passed. We need this tool to paint a better picture of the people behind the credit score and encourage those using the credit report to consider the full context of people's lives when making the decision to open or close a door to them.
- DC's vibrant music scene struggled during the pandemic when smaller venues had to close, leaving owners without an income and musicians without a place to play and make money. I heard from musicians and restaurant and music venues alike. As a native Washingtonian, I grew up in our live music culture, from go-go to jazz. I introduced and passed the [Performing Arts Promotion Tax Rebate Clarification](#)^L bill to support artists and the places that host them by making it easier for live performance venues to get tax rebates.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Everyone deserves a dignified place to live. As a fifth-generation Washingtonian, this issue is personal for me like it is for so many of you. Too many members of my own family have been forced out of the city as housing costs have increased beyond reach. Our government must do more, and I am committed to using all of the tools in my toolbox as your at-large Councilmember to ensure safe, affordable, and dignified housing for our residents.

Because my committee had oversight of redevelopment deals on District-owned property, I took action to reform the way the government gives away our public land. In November, I introduced the [Common Ground Amendment Act of 2022](#).* This bill requires that the District government be more thoughtful before giving away our public land to make sure we are meeting our housing needs — particularly affordable, family-sized units, which the District desperately needs. I reintroduced this bill in January 2023 so that it can serve as the foundation for our future considerations on land use.

Safe, affordable, and dignified housing requires a whole-of-government effort. We need to work together: the Mayor and executive agencies and the Council. District residents in public housing deserve for us to maintain their homes better. As public housing residents and dire headlines will tell you, that is unfortunately not currently the case. That's why I introduced the [Inspector General Oversight Consistency Amendment Act of 2022](#),* which allows the District's inspector general to investigate the Housing Authority.

During the Council's fiscal year 2023 budget process, I also successfully fought to **increase funding for Local Rent Supplement Program vouchers** to help residents afford their rent as well as **additional investments into the Emergency Rental Assistance Program**.



PUBLIC SAFETY

There are many aspects of public safety in the District. Residents deserve safety from gun violence, safety from discrimination, safety of movement around DC for pedestrians and bikers, and safety from aggressive driving on our roads. In the past year, I'm proud that I secured increased funding for violence intervention as well as stronger employment pathways and safety nets for returning citizens to reduce the chances of repeat offenses. I know, too, that we have more work to do for all residents to feel safe in their neighborhoods, and I am pushing to address both the increase in gun violence and the growing concern over juvenile crime.

- My Committee on Government Operations and Facilities pushed for and funded expanded hospital-based violence intervention programs that work with people who have been victims of violence to find job training, mental health support, and more to stop the cycle of violence.
- We increased funding to domestic and sexual violence organizations so that they can continue to empower survivors.
- My committee funded research from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council on factors that have a high likelihood of preventing young people from getting ensnared in the criminal justice system, and we are using this research as the foundation of our policy and program proposals.
- We added staff support for the Clemency Board, clearing a path home for more incarcerated Washingtonians. More employees means more cases reviewed, more pardons recommended to the president, and hopefully more pardons granted and people returning home.
- We paved the way for formerly incarcerated residents to pursue legal careers by doubling our investment in the successful paralegal program at Georgetown University, which provides a free certificate program followed by a yearlong paid fellowship program with law firms and other legal offices in the District.



REGIONAL PANEL ON VIOLENT CRIME.

DC Council seeks to codify abortion access and rights

BY JAMES WRIGHT JR.

ABORTION ACCESS

I believe that everyone has a right to choose when and how to become a parent. Like so many of you, I was deeply alarmed and determined to take action when the Supreme Court's draft decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* leaked in May, followed by its formal decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in June. I introduced three bills to expand District residents' access to abortion and protect health care providers:

- [The Protecting Health Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Amendment Act of 2022^L](#), which prohibits health professional licensing boards from taking away a health care provider's license because they provide an abortion for a resident of a state where abortion is illegal. The full Council passed this bill into law in December.
- [The Medical Malpractice Clarification Amendment Act of 2022*](#) prevents medical malpractice insurers from penalizing a DC health care professional for providing an abortion for a person who is a resident of a state where abortion is illegal. Those bills will help ensure that we have all hands on deck to meet this moment and that DC providers can continue providing care in the District.
- [The Reproductive Health Care Insurance Coverage Expansive Amendment Act of 2022*](#) requires that private insurers (in other words, not Medicaid) cover abortion care with no out-of-pocket expense for the patient to make this crucial health care procedure more affordable for as many people as possible. DC needs abortion to be accessible for all who want or need it. However, the federal government forbids DC from using our local tax funds to cover the cost of an abortion for people on Medicaid (yet another reason why we need statehood).

My committee also moved quickly to hold hearings on two human rights and abortion access bills. Councilmember Henderson's [Enhancing Reproductive Health Protections Amendment Act of 2022](#) protects anyone helping someone self-terminate a pregnancy from being punished under District law. Councilmember Nadeau's [Human Rights Sanctuary Amendment Act of 2022](#) prevents the District from cooperating with interstate investigations against people who receive abortion care in DC, where it is legal, and protects human rights, including access to gender-affirming medical care, reproductive health care and same-sex marriage. The Council passed both of those into law in October.



COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & FACILITIES

Last Council period I chaired the Committee on Government Operations and Facilities, which had responsibility over a broad range of topics, including contracts and procurement; maintenance of public buildings and property management; human rights; matters relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning affairs; issues related to women; veterans affairs; matters affecting administrative law and procedure; the Office of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC); and citizens returning from incarceration. As committee chair, I was laser focused on enhancing government services for District residents. For four years, committee staff and I worked tirelessly to strengthen transparency and accountability in our government agencies, and I am proud to say that, as a result, all of our committee's agencies are stronger and more effective. From clear-eyed oversight of DGS to a total revamp of the supports for ANCs, here are some highlights from the last year:



TEAM ROBERT WHITE AT THE CELEBRATE PETWORTH NEIGHBORHOOD FESTIVAL.



DC drops proposed insurance hike on businesses seeking to operate outdoor dining BY COLLEEN GRABLICK

MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK FOR WASHINGTONIANS

- After months of advocacy with the Office of Risk Management on behalf of small-business owners and the District's hospitality industry, the Mayor's office dropped its proposal to require substantially increased insurance for businesses applying for permits for streateries and sidewalk cafes. District small-business owners contacted me and shared that the new insurance requirements threatened their businesses and could force them to close shop. One business owner shared that their insurance typically costs between \$24,000–\$26,000 annually, but with the proposed increase in insurance coverage, it would have jumped to between \$120,000–\$150,000 annually.
- In the FY23 budget, the committee championed and successfully secured:
 - ✓ Expanded legal services funding for seniors.
 - ✓ Increased funding for the Senior Community Ambassador Program to connect more of our seniors to vital services.
 - ✓ Boosted funding for the Healthy Corners Program to fortify food access in lower-income communities.
 - ✓ Funding for increased workers' rights investigations staff to crack down on workplace abuses.
 - ✓ Funding for the Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption Amendment Act to ease disabled veterans' property tax burden.
 - ✓ Rehabilitation of public housing units.



After two failed attempts, DC Council passes law to make homelessness a protected class BY JASPER SMITH

ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Improving DC's Human Rights Act**

- ✓ [The Human Rights Enhancement Amendment Act](#)¹ takes the groundbreaking and necessary step to protect people experiencing homelessness from discrimination. During the hearing on this bill, people who are unhoused spoke about facing discrimination for being perceived as homeless and how that made it even harder for them to access housing. A nonprofit organization that works with unhoused residents reported that many of its clients are getting rejected from jobs they were qualified for when potential employers saw that they either had no home address or listed a shelter as their address. This bill provides human rights protections to unhoused people as they try to access employment, education, housing, and beyond. I also included in this bill several reforms to DC's Human Rights Act to strengthen protections for independent contract workers against workplace harassment and discrimination.
- ✓ [The Fairness in Human Rights Administration Amendment Act](#),* which I introduced in November, would update the Human Rights Act to allow people who are victims of discrimination to have the freedom to choose which option works best for them as they seek justice: either suing in court or submitting a case with the District's Office of Human Rights.
- ✓ [The Sexual Harassment Data Collection and Reporting Act](#)¹ increases transparency around how District agencies track and resolve sexual harassment reports. With the passage of this law, agencies are now required to collect data on the number of sexual harassment complaints they receive from employees and the result of the complaint process.

- **Fighting Gender Discrimination**

- ✓ I got passed into law the [Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Act](#),¹ which requires District government agencies to collect data on gender equality, require the Commission on Women to make training on gender equity and human rights available to District government employees, and mandates that the District develop an action plan to eliminate gender discrimination including the gender wage gap.

- **Supporting DC's LGBTQ Community**

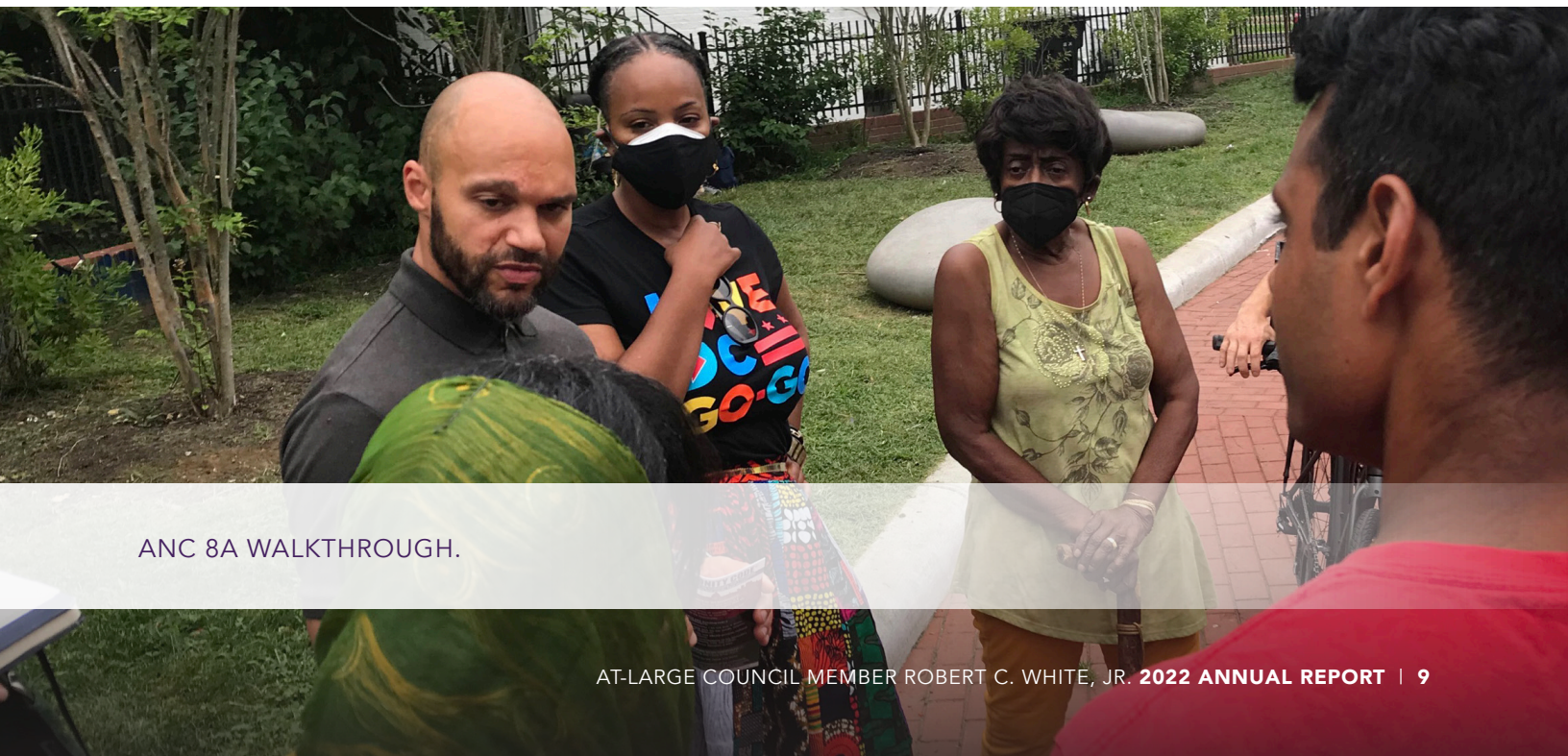
- ✓ My committee had oversight over matters relating to LGBTQ affairs, and over the last year, I worked hard to support the LGBTQ community and advance civil rights in the District. In the FY23 budget, I secured dedicated housing vouchers for 20 more LGBTQ neighbors through the Office of LGBTQ Affairs (OLGBTQA) and got a new LGBTQ housing specialist to provide better services to the community. I also secured more funding to support expanded opioid abuse protection programs for the LGBTQ community.
- ✓ I also introduced the [Pride Plates Amendment Act](#)* to create LGBTQ Pride specialty license plates as an option for drivers in DC, which will generate funds for OLGBTQA.

TAKING ACTION TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

- The impending impact from climate change on all of us demands an urgent response. Buildings are the biggest source of emissions in the District, so I introduced the [Greener Government Buildings Act](#),* which would require new DC government buildings to have net-zero emissions and would make DC a leader in green construction. The District government has over 35 million building square feet, a lot of which are aging properties that were not built with energy efficiency in mind.

PROVIDING ROBUST SUPPORT FOR ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

- In September, the Committee of the Whole held a hearing on the nomination of Kent Boese who was confirmed in November as the new OANC executive director. [Appointing a new OANC director](#)^L is the latest major step in my four-year work with commissioners to execute the biggest reform of the OANC since its creation. ANC commissioners play an incredibly valuable role in our local governance. Guided by the principle that ANCs can better serve our city if we serve ANCs better, my Committee on Government Operations and Facilities has also:
 - ✓ Substantially increased funding for ANCs' budgets.
 - ✓ Added employees at OANC, including a general counsel to assist commissioners with legal matters and staff to support commissioner training and onboarding.
 - ✓ Invested in implicit bias training, conflict mediation, and translation and interpretive services for commissioners.
 - ✓ Set up technical assistance for commissioners negotiating development projects.
 - ✓ Put funding toward hybrid meeting technology to preserve and improve on pandemic-era participation levels.
- Participation in ANC meetings surged when meetings went virtual while the District faced the pandemic lockdown. So, I worked with ANC commissioners to introduce and pass the [Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Pandemic Provisions Extension Second Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2022](#)^L that retained the option for virtual ANC meetings, even as the pandemic lockdown eased. Some ANCs prefer in-person meetings, so our legislation allows commissioners the flexibility to choose the best way to meet for their neighborhood.



ANC 8A WALKTHROUGH.

wtop

Report cites potential fraud risk in District's COVID-19 emergency contracts BY JACK MOORE

FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

- District residents like you deserve to have confidence that our government is spending public money responsibly, even during an unprecedented crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. I directed my committee to provide funding for the **DC Office of Inspector General (OIG) to audit nearly a half billion dollars of COVID-19 emergency contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic**. Unfortunately, the OIG found that because of how the administration handled emergency contracts, the District could have exposed itself to potential fraud.
- [The Procurement Agencies Alignment Amendment Act¹](#) makes needed reforms to ensure DGS and the Office of Contracting and Procurement are working in concert with one another on purchases for the District. This bill standardizes training across both agencies and requires the chief procurement officer to annually audit DGS' procurements — improving transparency around how taxpayer dollars are spent and helping local businesses identify opportunities for partnerships with the DC government.



Photo credit Sebastian Vizcarra

Thank you for reading!

I'm proud of what my team and I accomplished for District residents in 2022, and it remains the honor of my lifetime to serve as your At-Large Councilmember. In the coming year, here's what you can expect from me and my team:

- ✓ A consistent priority for listening to District residents.
- ✓ Getting problems solved efficiently and compassionately for constituents across the city.
- ✓ A commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Keep in touch

If you want to stay in the loop about everything we're doing, sign up to join our mailing list at www.robertwhiteatlarge.com.

You can contact me and my staff at any time with thoughts, feedback or requests for constituent services by phone at 202-724-8174 or via email.

- For legislative concerns, email Katie Whitehouse, *Legislative Director*, at kwhitehouse@dccouncil.gov.
- For constituent service needs, email Andre Strickland, *Constituent Services Director*, at astrickland@dccouncil.gov.
- For scheduling, email Samuel Walden, *Office Manager*, at swalden@dccouncil.gov.

Need help? Use these resources, or contact my team

Andre Strickland, *Constituent Services Director*:
202-724-8176 | astrickland@dccouncil.gov.

To make a service request in the District, contact 311 by phone, or visit www.311.dc.gov/citizen/home.

Call DC's Mental Health Hotline anytime, 24/7, for free support: 1-888-793-4357. Or dial 988 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.



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Photo credit Sebastian Vizcarra