



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

November 15, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Via Email

Dear Senators Schumer and McConnell:

As the elected members of Washington DC's legislative body, **we are writing to call your attention to the large number of judicial vacancies at the District of Columbia courts and ask that you act expeditiously to fill them before the end of the calendar year.** As of today, there are nine open seats on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and two on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. These vacancies have a meaningful impact on our public safety goals, our criminal and civil dockets, and the sustainable case load for our existing judges.

There are ten nominees currently pending in the Senate to fill existing DC judicial vacancies. It is vital that the Senate move quickly to confirm these nominees before the end of the calendar year.

With the Council's passage of the Secure DC Omnibus and the Mayor's implementation of this important public safety legislation, **the District has worked together to yield a significant decrease in crime with a 35 percent reduction in violent crime year to date. Swiftly and efficiently resolving cases is integral to further advancing public safety and avoiding delays in the administration of justice.** But at the Superior Court, judges are handling a growing number of new cases and have struggled to meet required deadlines in criminal cases. At the Court of Appeals, case dispositions are down by nearly half compared to 2013, the last year the court had a full bench. Filling existing vacancies on both courts should be a high priority and is key to our strategy for our shared goal of improving public safety for all District residents, workers, and visitors.

Should the currently pending judicial nominees fail to be confirmed by the end of year, the nomination process would have to start anew next year, wasting significant time and resources for the White House, the Senate, and the District of Columbia courts. Some of these nominees have been waiting for more than four years for confirmation. These vacancies represent roughly one in seven of all seats on our courts. This number will only grow as more judges are expected to retire. All of the pending nominees are well qualified and have been vetted and approved by the

independent DC Judicial Nomination Commission and the Biden Administration. Eight of them have also been approved by the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. We urge you to schedule votes for all of these nominees before the end of the calendar year.

Finally, while Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Peters and some of his predecessors have made moving DC judges a priority, we stand ready to work with the Senate to find a more expeditious way to process DC judicial nominations in the future. **Ensuring these local judges can be examined and confirmed quickly will help ensure the District of Columbia courts can administer justice efficiently and effectively and will aid in recruiting the best candidates possible.**

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Ward 2
Council of the District of Columbia




Chairman Phil Mendelson
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Christina Henderson, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia



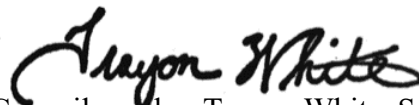
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Robert White, Jr., At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Trayon White, Sr., Ward 8
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Zachary Parker, Ward 5
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Matthew Frumin, Ward 3
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia

cc: Senator Gary Peters, Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
Senator Rand Paul, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs