

The Honorable Muriel Bowser,  
Mayor of Washington, DC  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Charles Allen  
Councilmember DC City Council  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
2136 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mayor Bowser, Councilmember Allen, Congresswoman Holmes Norton,

The undersigned participants in the ReThink Justice DC coalition write to draw your attention to an urgent situation regarding the District's only halfway house for men. For reasons given below, we believe that this DC-based halfway house is in danger of being closed, with no replacement, by the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). We are asking you to provide the leadership that is necessary to prevent the loss of a professionally-run, locally-based halfway house serving individuals returning from the BOP.

Recent credible news sources have disclosed that DC's only halfway house for men is in "limbo," attributing the ambiguous status to politics, land use issues and the BOP. Jenny Gathright explores all of this in the August 26th edition of DCist; "The Future Of DC's Halfway House for Men is in Limbo". Those of us who have signed onto this letter are voters, taxpayers and participants in the ReThink Justice DC Coalition who believe that a lack of definitive leadership has contributed to this stalemate. After the BOP awarded a contract for a halfway house, which promises to improve services and outcomes for our citizens, City government had the opportunity to resolve zoning, permit and neighborhood issues in favor of the contractor. Instead, our leaders stepped back while parochial politics and the preferences of commercial developers put the BOP in position to utilize an established or a new halfway house elsewhere for the District's returning citizens.

The history of our men's halfway house, and the role that this facility plays in our community, should be well known to you. Along with other advocates for our returning citizens, we believe these citizens should not be further penalized by placing them in a facility located in Maryland or Virginia, or even farther from the District.

We request that you take whatever actions are necessary to ensure that the BOP will enter into a contract for a halfway house located in the District of Columbia and managed by an organization with a proven track record of delivering services and programs that will give returning citizens a fair shot at finding housing, jobs and other needed services.

As Paula Thompson, co-chair of D.C.'s Reentry Action Network and executive director of the nonprofit Voices for a Second Chance has written, "...if there is no space being made here, that is a very sad day."

Your efforts to resolve administrative obstacles to the BOP's award of a contract to a halfway house in the District of Columbia will be greatly appreciated.