

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia

DC City Council, Committee of the Whole

Faith Leaders in support of Restoring Local Control Over Parole in the District of Columbia

Dear Mayor Bowser, Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers,

We are writing as leaders of the DC faith community to add our voices to those supporting restoring local control over parole in the District of Columbia.

As people of faith we respect the dignity of every human being and strive for justice for all people. We are at a unique crossroads where the District has an opportunity to establish local control of parole which is accountable to the DC community and would ensure our returning citizens a more humane, just and fair opportunity of reentry.

U. S Parole Commission members are not district residents or even former residents and they decide the fate of DC Code offenders. U.S. Parole Commission decisions have extended the incarceration of hundreds of DC residents and sent scores of the District's returning citizens back to federal prison every month for non-criminal, technical violations of supervision rules. Approximately 95% of those on the caseload of the U.S. Parole Commission are African-American and in D.C. the issue of over incarceration is even more closely linked to historic patterns of racism.

The U.S. Parole Commission has had the legal authority to release many older or disabled D.C. prisoners and prisoners with serious medical conditions housed in the federal Bureau of Prisons and they have rarely exercised this authority.

Bringing parole function back to DC would:

- Lead to an overall reduction in incarcerated District residents
- Significantly decrease, incarceration for non-criminal, technical violations of supervision rules
- Allow for better coordination with the federally-managed Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), resulting in improvements to how the agency's resources are used to benefit District citizens

- Create new opportunities to reduce DC Government spending through: (1) direct cost savings entailed in the reduction of locally-incarcerated DC residents; and (2) indirect, long-term savings generated from better coordination between the local parole authority and CSOSA in a way that more effectively ties reentry to evidence-based decarceration and restorative justice practices

Faithfully,

The Rt. Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington

Reverend Leila M. Ortiz, Bishop, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend LaTrelle Easterling, Bishop, Baltimore-Washington Conference, United Methodist Church

Bishop Dwayne D. Royster, Senior Pastor, Faith United Church of Christ

Reverend Dr. Wanda Thompson, Pastor, The Ambassador Baptist Church

Reverend Dr. Christopher Zacharias, John Wesley A.M.E Zion Church

Reverend Michael D. Wilker, Lead Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Reformation

Reverend Ben Hogue, Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Reformation

Reverend Billy Kluttz, Minister for Community Life & Connection, The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

Rabbi Charles Feinberg, Executive Director, Interfaith Action for Human Rights

Rabbi Julie K. Gordon, Rabbi Educator, Hill Havurah

Rabbi Josh Beraha, Associate Rabbi, Temple Micah

Reverend C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J., Pastor, Holy Trinity Catholic Church

Reverend Fr. Michael Bryant, Former DOC Jail Chaplain, Coordinator of Catholic Volunteers DC Jail & CTF

Reverend Chesterfield Bass Jr. and Dr. Yolanda Bass, Jericho Baptist Ministries and Victory Grace Center of the DMV

Pastor Larry Watson, Church of Christ, Right Now

Reverends Ruth and Brian Hamilton, Co-Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian DC (PCUSA)

The Reverend Paula E. Clark, Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of Washington

The Reverend Lisa Saunders Ahuja, Priest in Charge, St. Thomas' Episcopal Parish, Ward 2

The Reverend William Stafford-Whittaker, Rector, St. Monica & St. James Episcopal Church

The Reverend Jeanie Martinez-Jantz, Interim Rector, St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

The Reverend Amy C. Yount, Asst. Head of Upper School/Director of Secondary School Placement, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School

The Reverend Joshua Daniel, Ph.D., Associate Rector for Discipleship and Worship, St. Columba's Episcopal Church

The Reverend Jenifer Gamber Associate Rector and Chaplain St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Day School

The Reverend Ricardo Sheppard, Rector, The Episcopal Church of the Atonement

The Reverend Sarah Duggin, Associate Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church

The Reverend Michele H. Morgan, Rector, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill
The Reverend Scott Lipscomb, Priest-in-Charge, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church
The Reverend Yoimel González Hernández, Associate Rector, St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Central DC Clergy of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington

The Reverend Marilyn H. Jenkins
The Reverend Rhodesia Jarrett-Schell
The Reverend Richard M Weinberg
The Reverend Richard Wall
The Reverend Sarah Motley
The Reverend John Graham
The Reverend Savannah Ponder
The Reverend Andrew Walter
The Reverend Lisa Saunders Ahuja
The Reverend Gayle Fisher-Stewart
The Reverend Mary McCue
The Reverend Glenna J. Huber
The Reverend Bernard Anderson
The Reverend Susan Walker
The Reverend Robert W. Fisher
The Reverend Linda M Kaufman

The Reverend Dr. Harvey Bale, Deacon, St. David's Episcopal Church
Mr. John More, Washington Interfaith Network, St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, Ward 4 Res.
Mr. Bill Mefford, Executive Director, The Festival Center
Ms. Catalina Conneally-Salazar, Catholic Chaplain Volunteer, Women's Treatment Facility
Ms. Shelley Madden, Volunteer, CTF-DC Jail
Mr. Donald Holmes, Volunteer, DC Jail, DC Resident
Ms. Christina Bond, Volunteer, DC Jail

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