



People For Fairness Coalition



**Testimony of Sheila White, Member of People for Fairness Coalition (PFC) and Advocacy Fellow at
Miriam's Kitchen
Public Hearing on the Public Restroom Facilities Installation and Promotion Act of 2017 (B22-223)
Before the Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Wednesday, January 10, 2018**

Good morning Council Member Cheh and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Sheila White. I am a native Washingtonian – D.C. born and raised. I was raised in Ward 7 and currently live in Ward 2. I'm a member of the People for Fairness Coalition, an organization that works to end housing instability in the Washington DC area through Advocacy, Outreach, and Peer Mentoring. I am also an Advocacy Fellow at Miriam's Kitchen, where the mission is to end chronic homelessness in DC through meals, case management, outreach, housing, and advocacy.

This bill is important to me because everyone needs to use restrooms and everyone should have the right to access one when they need it. Unfortunately, it can be very hard to find a clean, safe restroom in Washington DC that is open to public. There only [3 public restrooms in the entire city that are open 24/7](#) and, because there are no signs, they are difficult to locate. Downtown near the Mall, there are 5 public restrooms, but they are only open during the day for limited hours. Most private businesses are no longer keeping [their restrooms open to the public](#).

People of all ages and all backgrounds need access to a restroom. **It's about dignity; it's about sanitation; it's about meeting the basic biological needs of your constituents.** Other states have restrooms for the people to use, why not our nation's capital? We need you to pass this bill to make restrooms available for everyone in the District: children, seniors, pregnant



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women, tourists, taxi drivers, joggers, people with various medical conditions and yes, people who live in the streets.

I myself am homeless and once walked more than ten blocks, from Gallery Place to George Washington University Hospital, before someone let me use the bathroom. Metro stations will not let anyone into their restrooms and most stores keep their doors locked. Even the stores I regularly buy from would not let me in, they said their restrooms were closed. Of course, the situation was becoming more urgent as time passed. If I didn't make it, I would have been too embarrassed to catch the bus I needed.

I hope you will take this bill into consideration so that people like you and me can have access to a restroom at any time. Thank you for listening to my testimony .