

**Testimony of George Olivar, member of the  
PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative  
At 2017 Department of Human Services Oversight Hearing  
March 8, 2018**

Committee Chair Nadeau, members of the Committee on Human Services, DHS Director Zeilinger,

My name is George Olivar. I am a proud member of the People for Fairness Coalition (PFFC) and of PFFC's Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative. I joined the Public Restroom Committee when it was getting started back in November of 2014. I took a leave of absence due to work and personal commitments in April of 2016. I reintegrated into the Committee in September of 2017.

As you know, PFFC is a group of individuals who are or who have experienced homelessness. Our objective is to end homelessness in DC through advocacy, outreach, and peer mentoring.

I would like to express, on behalf of myself and my colleagues who are members of PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative, our appreciation to you, Council Member Nadeau, for everything that you have done and are doing to support us.

You took time out of your busy schedule to meet with us in November of 2016. Having done extensive research in advance to document the problem with lack of clean, safe public restrooms in DC as well as documenting lessons learned and best practices, we had just perfected our skills in delivering presentations after receiving extensive assistance and coaching from a PR firm that offered to assist us. You were the second person to whom we delivered our "professional" presentation. Needless to say, we were a bit nervous.

When you met with us in our office, you immediately put us at ease. You followed our presentation closely showing your interest in the topic of public restrooms. The three of us who are formerly homeless felt very comfortable in your presence.

Two weeks later, to our surprise, we received an email from your office indicating that, based on what you learned in our presentation, you wanted to put public restrooms on your 2017 Legislative Agenda. We were thrilled when your staffer responsible for preparing the legislation reached out to us to obtain our input and asked us to review drafts.

In April 2017 you submitted Bill 22-0223, the Public Restroom Facilities Installation and Promotion Act of 2017. If made into law, a Working Group composed of a number of DC government agencies, including the Department of Human Services represented here

today by DHS Director Zeillinger, will be responsible for (1) identifying up to 10 sites in Washington DC where public restrooms are needed, along with the most appropriate public restroom option; and (2) providing recommendations for a program that would provide incentives to private businessmen to open their restrooms to the public.

We wasted no time generating support for Bill 22-0223, including obtaining the support of three BIDs for clean, safe public restrooms and having eleven ANCs send resolutions supporting our Initiative and Bill 22-0223 to members of the City Council.

When I rejoined the Public Restroom Committee in September, I became part of this work. I attended and participated in numerous ANC presentations that we delivered in September, October, and November. At the January 10, 2018 hearing on Bill 22-0223 I delivered testimony in support of the Bill.

Like my colleagues, I was very gratified that, in presenting your support for Bill 22-0223 from the Dias, you recognized that we served as the inspiration for the Bill.

In closing, Council Member Nadeau our sincere thanks for taking a chance on a group of individuals who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness who are passionate about the need for clean, safe, available public restrooms in needed areas of DC for everyone!

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to testify.