

FY 2022 Budget Oversight Hearing: Department of Small and Local Business Development

June 3, 2021

testimony submitted by Marc Friend, volunteer with the PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative

Committee on Business and Economic Development Chair McDuffie and members of the Committee on Health, my name is Marc Friend and I live in Kingman Park. I also volunteer with the DC People for Fairness Coalition Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative. I have come before the council many times to discuss the importance of public restrooms. As someone who has a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) who often needs a restroom urgently, I struggle to find one that is open and available in our city. In the past, I have shared many stories of unfortunate accidents that I have experienced due to the lack of access to restrooms throughout the city, but I will spare you the stories this time.

Today, I come before you to discuss Bill 22-0223, Public Restroom Facilities Installation and Promotion Act of 2018 which was introduced by Councilmember Nadeau, a champion on this issue, and passed by unanimous vote by the DC Council in December 2018, became Law 22-280 in April 2019, and went into effect on October 1, 2019. With the impact of COVID-19 last year, the restaurant pilot program was appropriately put on hold. I am pleased to see, now that the Mayor has given permission to these establishments to reopen to up to 100% capacity and that the \$66,000 removed in DC's FY 2020 budget has been reinstated in DSLBD's FY 2022 budget that this pilot can resume. I urge the council to approve this funding and if successful to continue to fund and expand this important program. Furthermore, I thank Director Whitfield and her staff for the work so far and are excited to work with them to make this a reality.

Thank you for your time and support for public restrooms.