

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE**



Public Roundtable Hearing
on

the Extended Juvenile Curfew and Designated Juvenile Curfew Zones
in the District of Columbia

Testimony of
Lindsey Appiah
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

Before the
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
The Honorable Brooke Pinto, Chairman

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10:30 a.m.
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 120
Washington, D.C. 20004

Good morning, Chairwoman Pinto, members, and staff of the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. I am Lindsey Appiah, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of the extended juvenile curfew and designated juvenile curfew zones.

As Mayor Bowser has said, one of the most critical and foundational responsibilities of government is to work to decrease crime and violence and increase safety for all the residents and visitors of the District. Over the past several years, the Executive has worked closely with Council on a set of common sense policies aimed at rebalancing our public safety and justice ecosystem that created tools to help combat crime across our city – several of these policies proposed in the Mayor’s Safer Stronger and ACT Now legislation were passed as part of the Council’s Prioritizing Public Safety Emergency Act in 2023 and the Secure DC Omnibus Act in 2024. And this year, the Executive supported many of the provisions in Chairwoman Pinto’s PEACE DC omnibus bill. Through increased accountability and extremely hard work across the whole of government and in partnership with community, we have driven down violent crime in our city by 53% since 2023.

While we are encouraged by these decreases, because it means fewer people are being victimized in our city, we know that all of us must remain diligent in continuing to address crime trends as they emerge. As Mayor Bowser recently said, “[t]he Council cannot backtrack on public safety. We cannot go back to the summer of 2023 when the fear in our city was palpable – a time that terrified residents, businesses, and visitors alike...[w]hat we hear from the community every day is that they want their government to keep people safe..[w]e have a policy that is working for our city and now is not the time to backtrack and repeat past mistakes and past policy failures.”

Unfortunately, by allowing the Juvenile Curfew Amendment Emergency Act to expire, the Council has done just that, and the results have been predictably negative.

In June, following a rash of juvenile “takeovers” that resulted in violence in neighborhoods in the District and in response to calls for action from affected residents, ANCs, and businesses, the Executive proposed the Juvenile Curfew Amendment Act of 2025. At that time Mayor Bowser said, “Most of our young people are doing the right thing, but unfortunately, we continue to see

troubling trends in how groups of young people are gathering in the community – in ways that too often lead to violence and other unlawful behaviors... And when we see patterns of unsafe or unlawful behavior that put young people and the community at risk, we have to act. This emergency legislation gave us stronger, more flexible tools to prevent violence and disorder before it starts and to keep our community safe.” We also increased recreational activities for youth to ensure they had safe spaces to have fun and enjoy being with other youth. Those actions helped us to significantly curb the negative behaviors we had seen for months prior.

We still believe that most of our young people are engaged in safe, positive behavior. But, since the expiration of the emergency, we have been back to the same place we were several months ago reversing the progress we had made. We have spent the past several weekends in a row addressing juvenile mayhem that has resulted in crime, violence, destruction, and the use of tremendous amounts of police resources at a time when our officers’ time would be best spent continuing to drive down crime over chasing youth around the city trying to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

This cannot continue because in addition to our residents’ reasonable expectation that we will continue to drive down crime and make our city safer, the stakes are even higher than ever before. In August, the President declared a crime emergency in the District invoking Section 740 of the Home Rule Act. While we know that we had driven crime down to its lowest level in decades prior to the emergency being declared, this action by the President stands as a stark reminder of our unique vulnerability because we are not a state, and the gravity of the moment in which we find ourselves in the District. We must be laser focused on preserving home rule and our autonomy and a vital component of that work is continuing to drive down crime and increase safety in our city. We cannot fail to act with the urgency and speed necessary to meet the ever-present challenges to our autonomy and self-determination. We believe we are best positioned to govern our city and implement policies that benefit our residents and visitors. Failure to act leaves a vacuum that the federal government has made clear that it will fill. And we don’t believe that is what is in the best interest of our residents, visitors, or our young people.

We must continue to work together on common sense policies that advance our shared goal of making our city the safest it can be while advancing our DC values.

With that in mind, I urge Council to not risk the progress we have made in driving down crime by removing tools from our criminal justice system that have helped us to keep our residents and visitors safe and to act quickly to pass the expanded juvenile curfew and curfew zones.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, Chief Smith and I are now available for questions.