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Former D.C. Police Reform Commissioners, Task Force on Jails and Justice Members, and Criminal Justice Advocates Unite to Release Black-Led, Evidence-Based, Legislative Agenda To Overhaul Public Safety

Participants of Inaugural 'Safety Summit 2022' Urge Council to Pass Stalled Public Safety Measures and Transform Policing, Prosecution, and Punishment in the District of Columbia

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 25, 2022 - A collective of more than 20 community organizations, dozens of criminal justice reform advocates, and policy experts including former Police Reform Commissioners and members from the Task Force on Jails and Justice today released [Solutions for a #SafeAndFreeDC](#), a Black-led, evidence-based, shared legislative agenda to transform public safety in the District of Columbia.

The legislative agenda, finalized at this morning's Safety Summit 2022, prioritizes 9 existing bills and 9 proposals to improve public safety and quality of life for all District residents that await D.C. Council action or introduction. The event, attended by over 350 residents and individuals, was convened as an urgent response to the D.C. Council's inaction to address outdated and ineffective policies that propagate one of the biggest, Blackest and most expensive criminal legal systems in the country.

"We organized this summit to make clear that the D.C. Council has a meaningful role to play in designing a District that is safer, freer, and more equal," said Patrice Sulton, founder and Executive Director of DC Justice Lab. "Despite the loudest calls for transformative changes we've seen in a generation, the Council has not passed any consequential legislation for more than a year. The movement for a [#SafeAndFreeDC](#) aims to change that."

"D.C. Councilmembers have made many promises and commitments to take steps towards real criminal justice reform, but we have not seen any meaningful action or developments," said Courtney Stewart, founder and CEO of the National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens. "Our legislative agenda is simple: change these draconian laws, make Returning Citizens a protected class, and repair the damage done to the Black and brown community. We implore the Council to pass these measures that are urgently needed now."

In 2021, the D.C. Council commissioned three comprehensive blueprints for transforming the criminal justice system through the [Police Reform Commission](#), the [Jails and Justice Task Force](#), and the [Criminal Code Reform Commission](#). Of more than 50 proposals reviewed by the Council's Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, many of which have overwhelming public support, the Council has enacted only a [ban on flavored tobacco](#).

In addition to unveiling [Solutions for a #SafeAndFreeDC](#), the Safety Summit educated community members about the current status of criminal justice-related legislation in the District and current Councilmembers' activity on the community-supported bills. The Summit also announced a April 14 D.C. candidate forum and summer advocacy workshops to support residents in demanding that the D.C. Council advance stalled public safety legislation.

“We call on members of the D.C. Council to review its progress on policies related to criminal justice reform and community safety and take principled action to ensure that campaign promises are fulfilled,” said Makia Green, co-conductor of Harriet’s Wildest Dreams. “We look forward to continued dialogue with councilmembers to help transform our community-driven legislative agenda into policies that actually make a difference. ”

The Safety Summit 2022 was organized by DC Justice Lab, National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, and Harriet’s Wildest Dreams. Access *Solutions for a #SafeAndFreeDC* legislative agenda along with a full list of supporters here: bit.ly/SafeAndFreeDC.

Join organizers and speakers at a virtual press conference at 2pm ET for remarks and Q&A with Tony Lewis Jr., DC Or Nothing, Ty Hobson-Powell, Concerned Citizens of DC, and Bethany Young, DC Justice Lab: bit.ly/SafeAndFreeDC-Press

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ABOUT DC JUSTICE LAB

DC Justice Lab is a team of law and policy experts researching, organizing, and advocating for community-rooted reforms to the District’s criminal legal system. We develop smarter safety solutions that are evidence-driven, community-rooted, and racially just. We aim to fully transform the District’s approach to punishment and public safety and make it a national leader in justice reform.

ABOUT HARRIET’S WILDEST DREAMS

Harriet’s Wildest Dreams is a Black-led abolitionist community defense hub centering all Black lives at risk for state-sanctioned violence in the Greater Washington area. Our work includes legal empowerment, political and civic education, mass protest, organizing campaigns, and community care that builds alternatives to oppressive systems. Our work is guided by our ancestors and centers on holistic healing and transformative justice.

ABOUT NATIONAL REENTRY NETWORK FOR RETURNING CITIZENS

The National Reentry Network is the premiere Returning Citizens organization in the United States. We help and assist the formerly incarcerated and imprisoned to become productive members of society and their communities by building a strong, national network of individuals returning from incarceration who support each other’s successful reintegration. We use a client-centered approach to identify basic needs and to create a continuum of care that can address barriers to reentry, promote restorative practices, and reduce recidivism.