

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**



**Office of the Director**

June 18, 2024

Stacey Litner  
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs  
700 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Email: [Stacey\\_Litner@washlaw.org](mailto:Stacey_Litner@washlaw.org)

**Re: Access to D.C. Council Hearings**

Dear Ms. Litner,

Thank you for contacting me with your follow-up inquiry on June 14, 2023, regarding residents' access and ability to review, watch, and provide live testimony at D.C. Council hearings. The District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DOC) values the availability of civic resources to its residents, as well as their ability to freely access and participate in open government. We actively promote voter engagement, and recently over 200 members of our population voted in the 2024 D.C. Primary Election.

As a voting body, DOC residents elected an ANC Commissioner within DOC (ANC F708). She represents residents housed at DOC's Central Detention Facility (CDF) and Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF), and also those housed at the Harriet Tubman Women's Homeless Shelter. Such representation, we believe strengthens the connections between the community and underscores the agency's commitment to fostering understanding and appreciation of the democratic process.

While DOC works to continue championing political engagement within its resident population, there are significant technological, logistical, staffing, and safety and security limitations, which inhibits our ability to allow residents to provide live testimony at D.C. Council hearings. Specifically, the DOC lacks the technological capacity (very limited Wi-Fi connectivity) that does not support the type of far reaching access you are seeking. Additionally, such access and participation in D.C. Council meetings would require a great deal of staff involvement and oversight. DOC is currently experiencing critically low staffing levels, with a significant resident population increase. We believe the best use of our resources, is spent ensuring that we are providing our residents a safe, secure and humane environment. Lastly, and most importantly, the

current access and participation that your inquiry requests is already being accomplished by way of the ANC F708 Commissioner. The ANC Commissioner has access to D.C. Council hearings, and participates in all ANC District-wide meetings. Moreover, the ANC Commissioner for ANC F708 has the ability to conduct town hall meetings, resident surveys, and visits with the represented resident population to ensure that their views and voice is heard. For the above-listed reasons and operational constraints, the DOC is unable to further consider the expansion at this time.

DOC remains committed to ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to stay informed about important legislative matters and appreciate your support in this effort. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact myself and the Office of the General Counsel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Faust", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Thomas Faust  
Director  
District of Columbia Department of Corrections

