



March 6, 2024

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
U.S. House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
United States House of Representatives
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer & Ranking Member Raskin:

We write today to express our opposition to two pieces of legislation your committee will consider tomorrow, both of which would repeal policies implemented by the District's local government. There are several issues that warrant collaboration between the District and the House Oversight and Accountability Committee; however, the proposed direction of these bills are of great concern and would undermine the progress we are making on critical issues facing our city, including public safety.

In recent months, the Mayor and the Council have worked together to respond to concerns that have been raised by District residents about public safety. We put into place emergency legislation over the summer that, among other things, expanded pretrial detention for violent offenders and enhanced penalties for certain gun crimes. That change in law has contributed to a significant decline in violent crime in the District in 2024 compared to last year. According to data collected by the Metropolitan Police Department, violent crime is down 12 percent and homicide and assault with a dangerous weapon are both down more than 30 percent.

H.R. 7530, the "D.C. Criminal Reforms to Immediately Make Everyone Safe Act," or "DC CRIMES Act," would halt work underway at the Council just this week to further this progress. Language in H.R. 7530 would amend the Home Rule Act to prohibit the Council from enacting "any act, resolution, or rule to change any criminal liability sentence" which would stand in the way of current efforts in the Council's "Secure D.C. Omnibus Amendment Act" to increase accountability for certain gun crimes, organized retail theft, and carjacking.

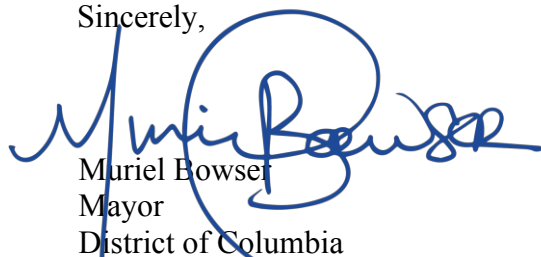
If H.R. 7530 were to become law, the District would be unable to respond to changing and emerging crime trends to address constituents' concerns, including enhancing specific criminal penalties. H.R. 7530 would result in delays in our ability to respond to crime trends with stronger criminal penalties.

And given recent experience, these delays could be extensive—letting criminals off with lighter sentences while legislation sits in Congress.

H.R. 7526, the “D.C. Consumer Vehicle Choice Protection Act,” would similarly stand in the way of progress that District officials are attempting to make for our constituents. It would repeal stricter emissions standards for new cars adopted this past December. Under the standards, new cars bought, sold, and registered in the District starting with the model year 2027 would be required to meet emissions standards based on the California Advanced Clean Cars II model, which promises to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and emissions linked to asthma, lung disease, and cancer—rates of which are high in the District. The District joined 13 states, including neighboring Maryland and Virginia, in adopting these standards. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey have as well, and Connecticut and Delaware have started the process. Enactment of H.R. 7526, then, would make the District an outlier in the Northeast in allowing unhealthy, inefficient gas-powered cars. The bill also ignores the fact that the District's new policy protects consumers—drivers would be able to keep any gas-engine cars purchased before 2035—as well as the fact that electric vehicles are projected to be as much as \$4,000 cheaper than the gasoline-powered equivalent in the coming years. This is on top of the maintenance and fuel savings electric car drivers will see over time.

We appreciate the committee's interest in these issues but respectfully request again that you allow the District's own elected leaders to use the authority given to them under the law to address these purely local matters. Instead of considering H.R. 7530 and H.R. 7526, we urge you to instead focus on areas where the District requires assistance from Congress, including by repealing the provision in law that prevents us from regulating cannabis sales, fully reimbursing MPD for the federal work it performs, and ensuring the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia has the resources needed to prosecute criminals. We would be happy to engage on these issues and others of importance to the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



Muriel Bowser
Mayor
District of Columbia



Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia