



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

May 21, 2025

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
House Oversight Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gerald Connolly
Ranking Member
House Oversight Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Connolly:

As Mayor of Washington, DC, I write to express my Administration's opposition to H.R. 2096, the "Protecting Our Nation's Capital Emergency Act of 2025". This legislation purports to protect hardworking police officers from unnecessary, protracted disciplinary procedures. However, it would reverse common-sense disciplinary reforms adopted by the District to the sole benefit of those few Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers who engage in egregious, sometimes criminal misconduct and seek to evade accountability.

A 2022 report by the District of Columbia Auditor¹ documented the shortcomings of the prior disciplinary process. It chronicled the cumbersome, union-negotiated process that on average took eight years to resolve a termination case. Over the 18-month period considered in the audit, 36 terminated police officers were reinstated within five and a half years of their terminations, at a cost of over \$14 million in backpay to DC taxpayers. This process was neither efficient for the officers nor responsible to the residents of the District.

The conduct for those terminated officers included criminal acts such as sexual assault, sexual abuse, indecent exposure, solicitation of prostitution, domestic violence, receiving stolen property, fraud, and false statements. For many of those cases, the misconduct was not in dispute; and in nearly 40 percent of the reinstatements, labor arbitrators applied their own, often conflicting, interpretations of procedural requirements and ordered reinstatement without even considering the merits of the cases.

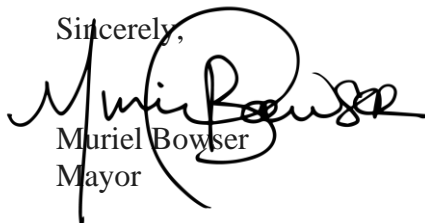
¹ <https://dcauditor.org/report/mpd-personnel-settlement-report/>

The Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 removed serious police discipline from collective bargaining and introduced additional transparency and accountability measures to address these systemic problems. This new process has been in place for more than two years and has been a success. Members are still entitled to union representation throughout the process and MPD policy still requires disciplinary cases to commence timely within 90 days, although those deadlines are tolled during criminal investigations.

Under the new system, members have a right to be heard, in person, before any discipline is imposed, and the vast majority of disciplinary cases are resolved by agreement. While labor arbitrators have been removed from the process, members still have the right to appeal their discipline to the independent Office of Employee Appeals (OEA). OEA has upheld the two termination cases it has considered under the new system – one originally overturned on a timing technicality involving a member who worked unauthorized outside employment while on duty, accepted gratuities, and made untruthful statements; and another where the member had repeated alcohol-related misconduct, including driving under the influence, public intoxication, and being the subject of a Substantial Risk Order that prohibited him from possessing a firearm. While the sample size is small, these sustained terminations are unquestionably the right outcomes for MPD, our residents and visitors, and the local and national elected officials that MPD serves.

The law enforcement disciplinary reforms implemented by the District were long overdue. They transformed a process where the determination of whether or not an officer is fit to wear the badge rests not with an unaccountable labor arbitrator, but with the official who bears ultimate responsibility for those members' conduct – the Chief of Police. I urge you once again to reject H.R. 2096, the "Protecting Our Nation's Capital Emergency Act of 2025," and to support the work of my Administration, including the Chief of Police, to maintain these critical accountability measures for officers that engage in egregious and criminal misconduct.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser", is written over the printed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Muriel" and last name "Bowser" clearly distinguishable.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor