

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

As organizations, faith leaders, and residents of the District, we ask that DC Council protect the investments in affordable housing and homeless services in the proposed FY 2016 budget. And we urge the Council to find ways to add resources to programs that the mayor was not able to fund adequately. The sentiment of District residents is clear -- enhancing services that will benefit DC residents should be the top priority, not reversing the modest sales tax increase in the mayor's proposal, as some policymakers have suggested.

Mayor Bowser proposed changing the sales tax rate from 5.75% to 6% to generate badly needed revenue. The new funds helped prevent widespread cuts in the face of a budget shortfall. And they helped support important initiatives in affordable housing, homeless services, and support for vulnerable families with children who would otherwise lose income and employment assistance. These investments are critical to alleviating income inequality and providing more opportunity for DC residents to thrive.

Some policymakers have expressed interest in undoing the sales tax increase, even though it would add just 25 cents to a \$100 purchase and would bring DC's sales tax rate in line with Maryland and Northern Virginia. Yet the city still has tremendous needs that should be addressed first, such as recent cuts to early childhood nutrition and afterschool programs.

**Instead of prioritizing a modest drop in the sales tax, the DC Council should protect new investments in affordable housing, homeless services, and economic security. If the Council finds further savings outside of those programs, the savings should go to other important services that have a real impact on the lives of District residents, including the following:**

Amount	Program
\$5 Million	Local Rent Supplement Program vouchers that can serve those on the DC Housing Authority waitlist
\$3 Million	Reinstate funding for the Healthy Tots Act of 2013
\$2 Million	Create a rental housing, rent control, and vacancy survey through the US Census
\$2.3 Million	Targeted Affordable Housing to serve 188 singles with housing
\$1 Million	Rapid Rehousing to serve 100 singles with housing
\$1.8 Million	Permanent Supportive Housing to serve 115 singles with housing and services

\$0.5 Million	8-10 shelter beds for pregnant or parenting teens and family reunification services
\$144,000	Additional beds and services for victims of domestic violence
\$ 2 Million	Create a Career Pathways Innovation Fund, and to pilot and scale career pathways across the city using new and emerging best practices
\$170,000	Implement the Unemployed Anti-Discrimination Act of 2012
\$801,671	Restore a fair process and cost of living increases for injured public sector workers in the Office of Risk Management
\$133,000	Bring the Office of Victims Services' baseline budget to prerecession levels
\$1.2 Million	Books From Birth Act of 2015
\$6.5 Million	Restore cuts to DCPS afterschool funding
\$2.5 Million	Maintain funding to afterschool programs through the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation
\$10 Million	Change eligibility recertification in the Healthcare Alliance program from six months to one year
\$ 2 Million	Restore money for tobacco control and cessation, including investment in tobacco quit-line and outreach campaigns for Medicaid beneficiaries.
\$100,000	Prevention Center in Ward 7& 8 that focus on preventing youth from using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
\$2 Million	Maintain support for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Fund
\$40 Million	Total

We thank you for your consideration and would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with you and your staff. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ed Lazere, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, at 202-325-8811 or Monica Kamen at the Fair Budget Coalition at 202 - 780-8322.

Sincerely,