



## **Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B**

### **RESOLUTION #4B-19-0403**

#### **Supporting Implicit and Unconscious Bias Training and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiatives for Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Adopted April 22, 2019**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B takes note of the following:

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B values the importance of acknowledging and preventing bias. As noted by the DC Office of Human Rights, “we refuse to believe that we cannot change society into something new. It starts with each of us understanding and addressing our own bias, whether it is related to someone’s race, ethnicity, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics. Last year’s civil rights advances and backslides, as well as tragedies here and abroad, can lead to insecurity and mistrust toward communities and each other if we are not careful.” DC Office of Human Rights, “#BeatBias Resolution Challenge,” <https://ohr.dc.gov/page/BeatBias>.
- On January 8, 2019, Councilmembers Kenyan R. McDuffie (Ward 5), Brianne K. Nadeau (Ward 1), Anita Bonds (At-Large), Trayon White, Sr. (Ward 8), Vincent C. Gray (Ward 7), Jack Evans (Ward 2), David Grosso (At-Large), Charles Allen (Ward 6), Robert C. White, Jr. (At-Large), Brandon T. Todd (Ward 4), Elissa Silverman (At-Large), and Phil Mendelson (Chair) introduced the Racial Equity Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2019, B23-0038. The proposed legislation seeks to operationalize racial equity in the District, in part by requiring the development of a racial equity training for all District employees.
- Specifically, Section 206b of the proposed legislation provides that the DC Office of Human Rights and the DC Department of Human Resources “shall develop and provide, on an on-going basis, racial equity training for employees of the District of Columbia” and “shall ensure that all agencies have the capacity to respond effectively to instances of racial discrimination.” Despite the important role Advisory Neighborhood Commissions play in working with residents and governmental agencies, they are not included within this provision.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B also values inclusive meetings and robust community engagement. Language access programs, American Sign Language interpretation services, and childcare services allow broader and more meaningful participation in Commission meetings.
- Accessibility and availability for participation and comment for all residents of a Commission area is a core function of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. Commissions are required by law to “set aside a portion of each public meeting to hear the views of residents within the Commission area and other affected persons on problems or issues of concern within the Commission area and on proposed District government actions that affect the Commission area.” Additionally, Commissions must “establish mechanisms to ensure the broadest dissemination of information with respect to Commission meetings, positions, and actions.” DC Code § 1-309.11(3).
- The DC government values language access, but it has not extended its programming to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. DC’s Office of Human Rights launched the Language Access Program to support its mission of eradicating discrimination, increasing equal opportunity, and protecting human rights for those who live in or visit the District. One of the goals of the Program is to “allow[] the District of Columbia to connect directly with a significant segment of its population, improving public health and safety for all.” DC Office of Human Rights, “Language Access Program,” <https://ohr.dc.gov/page/LAportal/public>. Advisory Neighborhood Commissions play an important role in addressing the interests of residents and ensuring residents connect with government services, and Commission meetings should be accessible to all residents, regardless of which language they speak.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commissions are inadequately funded to provide ongoing American Sign Language interpretation services. Despite a budget line item to fund such services, funding often runs out before the end of the fiscal year, requiring a Commission to pay for services from its annual allocation. See DC Code § 1-309.13(a). As a result, Commissions must choose between providing American Sign Language interpretation services and paying other necessary expenses.
- Childcare expenses are another hurdle to civic engagement among substantial portions of local communities. “Civic engagement may also cost money. When we recruit volunteers we are not only asking them to commit uncompensated time but we are usually asking them to bear the cost of volunteering – an implicit contribution of cash through the costs of their transportation, meals, *childcare*, appropriate attire and other expenses that may associate with their participation. This too may contribute to the disparities we observe since these associated cost will

be more burdensome to the poor, to the less educated, and to segments of the African-American and Latino communities. Where time and money are scarce in a household – for example, because members work long hours to pay for basic necessities – it may be harder for people to engage” (emphasis added). James B. Hyman & Peter Levine, Center for Information and Research on Civil Learning and Engagement “Civic Engagement and the Disadvantaged: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations,” at 14–15 (Dec. 2008).

## **RESOLVED:**

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests that the DC Council extend the Racial Equity Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2019, which would require racial equity training for all District government employees, to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests that the DC Council allocate full funding, to be administered by the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, to provide ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion resources for Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, including multilingual translation of meeting minutes and agendas, American Sign Language interpretation services at meetings; and childcare services at meetings.

## **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

## **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this resolution.

## **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

**ADOPTED** by show of hands vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of nine of nine members was present) on April 22, 2019, by a vote of 8 yes, 1 no, 0 abstain.