



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E

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Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E Resolution No. 2023-007 IN SUPPORT OF FOUR TRANSPORTATION AND STREET SAFETY BILLS AT THE D.C. COUNCIL

WHEREAS, in the calendar year 2023, there have already been 34 traffic fatalities as of September 19, which is 42 percent higher compared to YTD last year; and

WHEREAS, there have been multiple reported incidents of drivers who have continued to maintain their license despite thousands of dollars in unpaid traffic tickets. In addition, there has been a marked increase in the past several months of vehicles operating on the District roads that have expired or blatantly fraudulent tags; and

WHEREAS, D.C. Council will be considering the following four bills in October 2023; and

WHEREAS, B25-0422 - Automated Traffic Enforcement Effectiveness Amendment Act of 2023 would improve the deterrence effect of ATE systems by assessing points against the driver's license for offenses. Currently ATE-detected traffic violations are only assessed a fine that is often not paid, thus having none of the desired deterrence effect. appears that many if not most of our most egregious traffic violations are by repeat offenders who would rather quickly lose their license if points were assessed against their poor driving behavior. While not within Council legislative authority, the District under the Mayor's authority should proactively engage in a reciprocity agreement with neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia, the District would be able to collect the billions of dollars that are currently owed to the city in unpaid fines; and

WHEREAS, B25-0421 - License Suspension Reform Amendment Act of 2023 would remove the license and registration of the most serious offenders of motor vehicle violations, taking the driver and vehicles involved off the road. The bill says that this would be levied against drivers "charged" with these egregious violations, not waiting for a court to take its time to evaluate the case (which can take years, during which time

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currently that driver and vehicle are on the road potentially committing additional offenses). The court could decide to reverse the removal of the license and registration, for cause, but as most of our most serious motor vehicle offenses appear to be repeat offenses by a small number of drivers, this bill would help by immediately seizing the right to drive of someone who has committed these most serious of motor vehicle offenses. This is yet another meaningful deterrent to bad and dangerous driving and is sorely needed; and

WHEREAS, B25-0435 - Fraudulent Vehicle Tag Enforcement Amendment Act of 2023 would make “immediately towable” vehicles found to have fraudulent tags. The bill would also require the Mayor to create and maintain a list of all temporary and permanent license plates. Over the last several months, there has been a marked increase in fake and outdated temporary tags on vehicles that are operating in D.C.’s streets, which is an additional security concern for authorities and residents. D.C. Council should ensure that MPD has access to information about temporary plates and tags that are issued by dealers through this legislation, as well as stolen tags, in order to best investigate such cases; and

WHEREAS, B25-0425 - Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility (“STEER”) Amendment Act of 2023 adds an important currently missing tool to enforcement of egregious motor vehicle use, separating the payment of fines from suspension of a drivers’ license and registration, responding directly to complaints heard that some drivers cannot pay their fines. This would arguably allow those who cannot pay fines to avoid paying them, but at the same time take the license and registration of these irresponsible drivers, taking them off the street without regard to the justness (or lack of it) in the fines themselves. The bill further empowers the D.C. Attorney General to take action against out-of-state drivers and/or motor vehicles who violate traffic laws in the District with near impunity. While ANC 5E is supportive of this bill, a full reciprocity agreement between the District of Columbia and the neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia would help advance efforts to improve street safety and ensure the repayment of fines, which the Mayor’s office should pursue post-haste. A

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deterrent is only effective if the consequences of ignoring the deterrent are enforced, and this helps do just that; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ANC 5E supports the above-mentioned bills with mentioned recommendations to further strengthen these legislative fixes, and asks for D.C. Council to pass them at the first possible opportunity.

THIS RESOLUTION came before ANC 5E at a duly noticed public meeting on September 19, 2023. ANC 5E is composed of 6 Commissioners, such that 4 Commissioners constitute a quorum. With 6 Commissioners present, ANC 5E voted 6-0-0 to adopt this resolution.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chairperson, ANC 5E
Karla M. Lewis

Corresponding Secretary, ANC 5E
Frederick Carver

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