



2018 SEP -6 AM 11:56  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY

MURIEL BOWSER

MAYOR

SEP - 6 2018

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I am returning signed Bill 22-203, the “Birth-to-Three for All DC Act of 2018.” While the goals of this bill are laudable, I am concerned that the bill creates a false expectation for families in Washington, DC. As you know, the fiscal impact of this bill makes it unlikely to be funded without additional tax revenue or significantly curtailing other priorities.

One such priority is implementing the “Universal Paid Leave Amendment Act of 2016,” which Council passed over objections from many in the community on December 20, 2016. I returned that measure unsigned because it requires raising taxes in order to spend a significant amount of District funds without prioritizing District residents. I am taking this opportunity to remind the Council that of the \$250 million in new taxes per year raised by the Universal Paid Leave Program, 66 percent, or approximately \$166 million, will be spent on residents of surrounding jurisdictions. Council decisions such as this leave less funding for programs that will truly have a positive impact on District residents, such as the “Birth-to-Three for All DC Act of 2018.”

Bill 22-203, the “Birth-to-Three for All DC Act of 2018” would cost \$277.23 million across the four year financial plan, compared to an annual cost of \$250 million for the Universal Paid Leave Program. In addition, spending on Bill 22-203 would go directly to benefit District residents. This represents a much sounder use of District resources than the Universal Paid Leave Program.

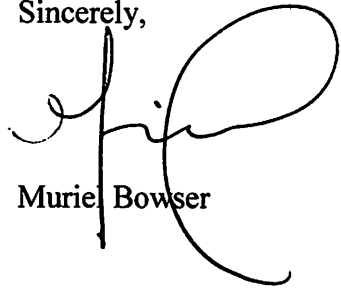
While the economy in the District is strong, we have responsible limitations on the budget in place to ensure that we continue to grow. I urge the Council to take these limitations into account and make a choice to prioritize District residents. The Council can start by refocusing Paid Family Leave to prioritize DC-only programs, including the childcare components of the “Birth-to-Three for All DC Act of 2018.”

Regardless of the Council’s decision, my Administration will continue to take steps to make child care more accessible and affordable for District residents. To that end, we have funded

increased subsidies for child care providers and expanded access to District facilities for providers. These steps are providing tangible solutions for the needs of families.

I encourage the Council to continue to work with me to focus on providing child care resources to District residents in a fiscally responsible manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Muriel Bowser