

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** All Councilmembers

**FROM:** Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Committee of the Whole *Phil Mendelson*

**DATE:** January 21, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Report on PR 23-582, "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2020"

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 23-582, "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2020" was referred, reports favorably thereon with technical amendments, and recommends approval by the Council.

CONTENTS

I.	Background And Need.....	1
II.	Legislative Chronology.....	4
III.	Position Of The Executive .....	5
IV.	Comments Of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions .....	5
V.	Summary Of Testimony.....	5
VI.	Impact On Existing Law .....	6
VII.	Fiscal Impact.....	6
VIII.	Section-By-Section Analysis .....	6
IX.	Committee Action.....	6
X.	Attachments .....	6

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**I. BACKGROUND AND NEED**

On November 26, 2019, Proposed Resolution 23-582, the "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2019,"<sup>1</sup> was introduced by Chairman Phil Mendelson at the request of the Mayor. PR 23-582 would confirm the Mayor's nomination of Ms. Cora Masters Barry for appointment as a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities for a term to end June 30, 2021.

Ms. Barry is a Ward 8 resident. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas Southern University and a Master of Arts from Howard University. Currently, she serves as CEO and member of the Board of the Directors of the Recreation Wish List Committee (RWLC). Ms.

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<sup>1</sup> The title of the resolution has been updated to reflect that the resolution was introduced in 2019 but is being considered by the Council in 2020.



Barry founded the RWLC in 1994. It is a nonprofit organization that provides recreational space and a nurturing learning environment for underserved youths in Wards 7 and 8. As CEO of RWLC, she has led the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center (SETLC). The SETLC provides tennis programming for residents of all ages, and in 2005 it was named the “Youth Tennis and Learning Facility of the Year” by the United States Tennis Association. The SETLC hosts the “Blacks ‘N Wax” program, which features young people depicting famous African Americans and reciting their message. Ms. Barry is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation.

The Commission on the Arts and Humanities (Commission) was established by the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-201 *et seq.*). The Commission is now an independent agency within the District government<sup>2</sup> and is designated by the National Endowment for the Arts as the state arts agency for the District of Columbia. Its role is to evaluate and initiate action on matters relating to the arts and humanities and to encourage programs and the development of programs that promote progress in the arts and humanities.<sup>3</sup>

The Commission consists of 18 members appointed by the Mayor for three-year term, with the advice and consent of the Council.<sup>4</sup> The Commission is tasked with appointing an Executive Director who serves as the chief administrative officer of the Commission.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the mission of the Commission is to provide grants, programs, and educational activities that encourage diverse artistic expressions and learning opportunities so that all District of Columbia residents and visitors can experience the District’s rich arts and humanities community.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the Commission must be District residents and must have displayed an interest or an ability in the arts and humanities or must be active in the furtherance of the arts or humanities.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the Mayor has to give due consideration to recommendations made by the arts and humanities community, and has to ensure that there is reasonable representation of all the wards in the District when considering appointments to the Commission.<sup>8</sup> Further, no employee of the District government can serve as a member of the Commission.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Commission became an independent agency on July 22, 2019. *See* section 2204 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Independence and Funding Restructuring Amendment Act of 2019, effective September 11, 2019 (D.C. Law 23-16; 66 DCR 9621). *See also* the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Budget Subtitle Technical Emergency Amendment Act of 2019, effective October 20, 2019 (D.C. Act 23-129; 66 DCR 14808); and the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Budget Subtitle Technical Temporary Amendment Act of 2019, effective December 24, 2019 (D.C. law 23-39; 67 DCR 14816).

<sup>3</sup> D.C. Official Code § 39-203(a).

<sup>4</sup> D.C. Official Code § 39-203.

<sup>5</sup> D.C. Official Code § 39-205.

<sup>6</sup> Commission on the Arts and Humanities - About CAH, <https://dcarts.dc.gov/page/about-cah> (last visited January 11, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> *Supra* note 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*



In the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Support Act of 2019,<sup>10</sup> the Council approved additional requirements for individuals to be eligible to serve on the Commission. By July 1, 2019, six of the 18 members appointed to the Commission are required to meet the following requirements: (1) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities; (2) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in arts or humanities education; and (3) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in theatre and performing arts.<sup>11</sup> By July 1, 2020, four of the 18 members appointed to the Commission are required to meet the following requirements: (1) two members with specific interest, ability, or experience in public art; and (2) two members with specific experience in arts or humanities organizational administration or governance.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1: Membership of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities**

Resolution #	Commissioner	Term End Date	Ward
PR 23-576	Alma Gates (specific interest, ability, or experience in public art)	June 30, 2022	3
PR 23-577	Rhona Friedman (specific interest, ability, or experience in theatre and performing arts)	June 30, 2022	2
PR 23-578	Jose Alberto Ucles (specific interest, ability, or experience in theatre and performing arts)	June 30, 2022	5
PR 23-579	Mary Ann Miller (specific interest, ability, or experience in arts or humanities education)	June 30, 2022	3
PR 23-580	Cicie Sattarnilasskorn (specific interest, ability, or experience in arts or humanities education)	June 30, 2022	1
PR 23-581	Dr. Natalie Hopkinson (specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities)	June 30, 2021	5
PR 23-582	Cora Masters Barry (specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities)	June 30, 2021	8
R.22-181	Stacie Lee-Banks	June 30, 2020	3
R.22-182	Miles Gray	June 30, 2020	8
R.22-185	Maria Rooney	June 30, 2020	4
R.22-186	Josef Palermo	June 30, 2020	1
R.22-394	Edmund Fleet	June 30, 2020	7
R.22-433	Chinedu Osuchukwu	June 30, 2020	7
R.22-557	Quanice Floyd	June 30, 2020	6
R.23-15	Kymber Menkiti	June 30, 2021	4
R.23-16	Kay Kendall (Chairperson)	June 30, 2021	2
R.23-17	Gretchen Wharton	June 30, 2021	6
R.23-62	Derek Younger	June 30, 2022	5

Ms. Barry believes her more than 30 years of experience working with the government, institutions of higher learning, businesses, and nonprofits in the District will help her connect the Commission with District artists which in turn will help artists build pathways to opportunity and success.<sup>13</sup> She will bring a voice of compassion and reason to the Commission in order to bring people together from all segments of the arts and humanities community to promote a rich and culturally diverse community.<sup>14</sup> At the hearing on PR 23-582, Ms. Barry mentioned that her over

<sup>10</sup> Effective September 11, 2019 (D.C. Law 23-16; D.C. Code § 39-201 *et seq.*).

<sup>11</sup> *Supra* note 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> See Cora Masters Barry, Written Responses to the Committee of the Whole's Pre-Hearing Questionnaire, 3, January 8, 2020. (Attached to this Report).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*



20 years as a professor at the University of the District of Columbia and her leadership of the Blacks N' Wax Theater Production has taught her how the arts and humanities are a tool that can be used to drive social change.<sup>15</sup>

Ms. Barry has agreed to serve because she wants to not only sustain the District's rich culture, but she wants it amplified.<sup>16</sup> She is committed to ensuring that the Commission is fair and transparent, and that there is a level playing field for all the individuals seeking the support of the Commission.<sup>17</sup> Further, she is committed to working with other members of the Commission to make certain there is proper oversight of the Commission staff, and that the policies in grantmaking, education, and professional development serve all District residents.<sup>18</sup>

Ms. Barry meets the requirements to serve as a member of the Commission pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 39-203(a-1)(2)(A) as she has a specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities. Her extensive public service background and her knowledge of the District government give her experience that will be useful to serve on the Commission. Moreover, the Committee agrees with Ms. Barry's policy to treat equally all requests for funding. The Committee recommends adoption of PR 23-582.

## II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| November 26, 2019 | PR 23-582, the "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2019" is introduced by Chairman Mendelson at the request of Mayor Bowser.   |
| December 3, 2019  | PR 23-582 is "read" at the December 3, 2019 Legislative meeting; on this date the referral of the PR to the Committee of the Whole is official and the 90-day period for Council review begins. If this measure is not acted upon by the Council before March 11, 2020, PR 23-582 will be deemed disapproved. |
| December 6, 2019  | Notice of Intent to Act on PR 23-582 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .   |
| December 6, 2019  | Notice of Public Hearing on PR 23-582 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .  |
| January 3, 2020   | Revised and Abbreviated Notice of Public Hearing on PR 23-582 is published in the <i>DC Register</i> . The notice was revised to reflect a change in the time of the hearing.   |

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<sup>15</sup> Cora Masters Barry, Nominee, Testimony before the DC Council Committee of the Whole, 2, January 9, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

January 9, 2020        The Committee of the Whole holds a public hearing on PR 23-582.

January 21, 2020        The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 23-582.

### III.     POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ms. Cora Masters Barry is the Mayor's nomination for appointment to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

### IV.     COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on PR 23-582.

### V.      SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on PR 23-582 (and 6 other nominations to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities) on Thursday, January 9, 2020. The testimony summarized below, and attached, is from the portion of the hearing pertaining to Ms. Barry.

***Michael C. Rogers, Public Witness***, testified in support of PR 23-582. He testified that Ms. Barry will be an excellent addition to the Commission since she has made significant contributions to the arts and humanities and is a great supporter of arts and culture in the District.

***Monica T. Ray, President, Congress Heights Community Training & Development Corporation***, testified in support of PR 23-582. Ms. Ray testified that Ms. Barry is an ideal candidate for the Commission who will ensure that all District residents and visitors have the opportunity to experience the rich culture of the District.

***Cora Masters Barry, Nominee***, testified and answered questions from Chairman Mendelson regarding her background and experience as it pertains to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities and her interest in serving on the Commission.

#### **Testimony Submitted for the Record**

***Reginald Van Lee***, wrote in support of PR 23-582 because Ms. Barry's dedication and passion for the arts will have a positive impact for the residents of the District.

The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to Ms. Barry's appointment.

## VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Members of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities are appointed pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203).

## VII. FISCAL IMPACT

PR 23-582 will have no fiscal impact on the District of Columbia budget or financial plan. Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 39-203(e), members of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities do not receive compensation.

## VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

<u>Section 1</u>	States the short title of Proposed Resolution 23-582.
<u>Section 2</u>	Confirms the appointment of Cora Masters Barry a member of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities for a two-year term to end June 30, 2021.
<u>Section 3</u>	Requires that a copy of the resolution, upon adoption, be transmitted to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.
<u>Section 4</u>	Provides that the resolution will take effect once approved by the Council.

## IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

On January 21, 2020, the Committee met to consider PR 23-582, the “Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2020.” The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m., and PR 23-582 was item V-N on the agenda. After ascertaining a quorum (Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers Allen, Bonds, Cheh, Gray, Grosso, McDuffie, Silverman, Todd, R. White, and T. White present; Nadeau absent), Chairman Mendelson moved *en bloc* the Print and the Report for PR 23-582 together with six other nominations to the Commission (PR 23-576, PR 23-577, PR 23-578, PR 23-579, PR 23-580, and PR 23-581) with leave for staff to make technical, conforming, and editorial changes. After an opportunity for discussion, the vote on the Print and Report was unanimous (Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers Allen, Bonds, Cheh, Gray, Grosso, McDuffie, Silverman, Todd, R. White, and T. White voting aye; Nadeau absent). The meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

## X. ATTACHMENTS

1. PR 23-582 as introduced.




2. Nominee's response to Committee questions.
3. Written testimony.
4. Legal Sufficiency Determination.
5. Committee Print for PR 23-582.

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.**  
**Washington D.C. 20004**

Memorandum

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To : Members of the Council

From :  Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : December 02, 2019

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Tuesday, November 26, 2019. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation Resolution of 2019", PR23-0582

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson at the request of the Mayor

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole. This resolution will be deemed disapproved on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 without Council action.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel  
Budget Director  
Legislative Services



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OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY

MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

NOV 26 2019

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

In accordance with section 2 of the Confirmation Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-142; D.C. Official Code § 1-523.01), and pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), I am pleased to nominate the following person:

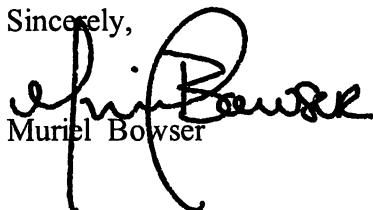
Cora Masters Barry  
161 Raleigh Street SE  
Washington, DC 20032  
(Ward 8)

for appointment as a member with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, replacing Lawrence Green, for a term to end June 30, 2021.

Enclosed you will find biographical information detailing the experience of the above-mentioned nominee, together with proposed resolution to assist the Council during the confirmation process.


I would appreciate the Council's earliest consideration of this nomination for confirmation. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Steven Walker, Director, Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments, should the Council require additional information.

Sincerely,



Muriel Bowser



  
Chairman Phil Mendelson  
at the request of the Mayor

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Chairman Phil Mendelson, at the request of the Mayor, introduced the following resolution,  
which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_.

To confirm the appointment of Cora Masters Barry to the Commission on the Arts and  
Humanities.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
resolution may be cited as the "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry  
Confirmation Resolution of 2019".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the appointment of:

Cora Masters Barry  
161 Raleigh Street SE  
Washington, DC 20032  
(Ward 8)

as a member with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities of the Commission on  
the Arts and Humanities, pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities  
Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), replacing  
Lawrence Green, for a term to end June 30, 2021.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,  
upon its adoption, to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

## Cora Masters Barry



Trailblazer, Change Agent, Community builder, Dream Maker, Motivational Speaker, Political Scientist, Sports, Tennis, and Education Powerhouse, Cora Masters Barry has transformed the lives of countless young people, who are now empowered and committed to making a difference in our communities, our nation, and the world.

While First Lady of the District of Columbia, in 1994 Mrs. Barry founded the Recreation Wish List Committee (RWLC) to provide recreational space and nurturing learning environment for underserved DC youth. In 2001, the doors of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center (SETLC), a state-of-the art facility opened with a \$5.1 million grant from the City. Today, the SETLC sits as a shining star in Washington D.C.'s Ward 8—one of the District's most underserved and under resourced areas, with the lives of over 15,000 young people being touched. The SETLC was remodeled in 2015 with an additional \$18 million in funding. Plans are now underway to add a new wing to the SETLC campus.

Under Mrs. Barry's outstanding leadership, the SETLC has not only excelled in teaching children the sport of tennis, but has also provided excellent academic tutoring and essential life skills training to every child who comes through its doors. The SETLC was named the "Youth Tennis and Learning Facility of the Year," by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) at the 2005 U.S. Open, and at the same time, was featured on the TBS Network. Since the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center's inception, it has received numerous awards; has been recognized as a premiere tennis and educational facility; and, has been highlighted on all major networks, including: CBS News, NBC News, ABC News, ESPN News, and in other major publications throughout the world.

As a testament to the extraordinary success of the SETLC-Mrs. Barry's vision, and her unequalled leadership and business acumen, she has been named the recipient of the National Recreation and Park Association's "2017 Robert M. Artz Citizen Advocacy Award," the highest and most prestigious award given out by the Association.

For Mrs. Barry, a political scientist turned youth developer extraordinaire, "Tennis is the hook, but Education...the Key." The SETLC's education wing has classrooms, a computer center, and a round room for events and performances. Students are recruited from nearby schools and attend after school programs and the Center's summer school for help needed to perform at grade level. Her passion for creating new possibilities for area youth has helped them learn and honor their rich heritage, while gaining skills to compete in the high-tech 21st Century culture and economy. She has turned her passion for African-American history, into the SETLC's outstanding "Blacks in Wax" program, which features young people depicting and reciting the messages of famous Africans Americans. The scholars of the Center are even styled and wardrobe to look like these heroes. This remarkable educational program has been celebrated on the Millennium Stage of the

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the White House, and is showcased throughout the District of Columbia as well as across the nation.

Mrs. Barry's exceptional skills in building strong partnerships has attracted widespread support for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center from her friends, tennis icons Venus and Serena Williams, as well as tennis legends Pam Shriver and Zina Garrison. She has also developed powerful public- private partnerships with major businesses like Microsoft, Apple, Comcast, Pepco, Nike, and Bank of America. The Center remains the crown jewel of the Recreation Wish List Committee, under the leadership of Mrs. Barry, with its key partner, the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, and the support of the entire District of Columbia community.

Beyond her trailblazing work with the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, Cora Masters Barry is described by many as a renaissance woman, skillfully working to break down barriers. A former twenty-one year tenured Professor of Political Science at the University of the District of Columbia, Mrs. Barry specialized in Black Politics, Comparative Political Studies, the Presidency, and the Constitution. She helped young people evolve—expanding their world view and encouraging them to understand and utilize the political process to effect change. Many of the students she inspired have gone on to become elected officials, high ranking government officials, captains of industry, and community leaders.

For over thirty years, Mrs. Barry has applied her knowledge and skills in politics to orchestrate voter education, registration and mobilization initiatives, both locally and nationally; including, the historic political return of Mayor Barry's return in office for an unprecedented fourth term as Mayor of the District of Columbia. It was this bold and energized effort that led to her appointment to head the Million Man March Voter Registration Drive team, which registered over one million men before and during the March.

Mrs. Barry along with Civil rights icon, Dr. Dorothy I. Height also served as co-organizers of "Women for the Million Man March," where they were responsible for galvanizing support and participation of women from across the United States. Mrs. Barry, the first woman to speak at the historic October 10, 1995 Million Man March, is credited with orchestrating the participation and speaking roles for Dr. Maya Angelou, Dr. Betty Shabazz, and other local and national women at the March.

Cora Masters Barry's long and impressive career in the field of Sports began as Chairman of the DC Boxing and Wrestling Commission, the first woman in the United States to hold such a position in the male- dominated sport of boxing. As in other endeavors, Mrs. Barry utilized the platform to address inequities, including the lack of women involved in the sport. She was the first to have women included ringside as medical professionals and judges. True to her passion for youth development, she also established the Mayor's World Cup which expanded their horizons and opportunities in the sport for local youth. Mrs. Barry, a member of the Executive Board of the World Boxing Council was elevated to the International Boxing Federation.

Throughout her celebrated career, Cora Masters Barry has been the recipient of numerous awards. She is the proud recipient of the Community Impact Award from the DC Chamber of Commerce. Café Mocha, the nationally syndicated radio show best known as "radio from a woman's perspective," recognized her with the "Salute Her: Champion for Children Award," for



her passion, commitment, and development of children, and for providing a safe haven for youth at the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center. The Washingtonian Magazine honored her as a "Washingtonian of the Year, 2013."

Mrs. Barry is the proud recipient of the Founders Award, the highest honor bestowed on civilians by the USTA. Her remarkable accomplishments have led to her induction into the USTA's Mid-Atlantic Tennis and Education Foundation's Hall of Fame, and most recently in 2018 into the Black Tennis Hall of Fame. She was also named a Tennis Hero by Tennis Magazine.

Cora Masters Barry's passion for developing urban youth is reflected in her membership with such influential, civic-minded organizations as the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW); the National Coalition of Civic Participation; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; and Leadership Greater Washington, which emerges professionals in regional civic engagement.

As a result of the diversity of her high level experiences and expertise, Mrs. Barry has become a much sought after motivational speaker, moderator, and panelist on topics related to organizational building, management, philanthropy, and non-profit development, empowerment of children and youth, as well as voter registration and education, on the local, regional, and national levels.

Originally from Pasadena California, Cora Masters Barry has been a resident of Washington, DC for over 40 years. She has two adult daughters, Lalanya Masters Abner and Dr. Tamara Masters Wilds Lawson. She is a proud grandmother to her beloved and only granddaughter, Zora Asali Lawson.



Executive Office of the Mayor - Office of Talent and Appointments  
John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 600 | Washington, DC 20004

### **Cora Masters Barry**



Ms. Cora Masters Barry has a long history of public service and commitment to the District. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Recreation Wish List Committee. In this capacity, Ms. Masters Barry has helped lead the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center where youth in Washington, DC can learn about tennis.

In 1980, she was appointed as the first woman on the three-member DC Boxing and Wrestling Commission, where she ultimately became chairman.

Ms. Masters Barry is a former University of the District of Columbia political science professor and began her career in Washington, DC completing community projects the Anacostia and Shaw neighborhoods. Ms. Masters Barry worked as a counselor for teenage girls with Operation Sisters.

A Ward 8 resident, Ms. Masters Barry received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas Southern University and a Masters of Arts degree from Howard University.



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

Phil Mendelson  
Chairman

Office: (202) 724-8032  
Fax: (202) 724-8085

December 18, 2019

Ms. Cora Masters Barry  
161 Raleigh Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Ms. Barry,

Congratulations on being nominated for appointment to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities (Commission). As you know, the appointment is subject to confirmation by the Council. The Committee of the Whole has scheduled a public hearing on your nomination for **Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 412**. Enclosed is a copy of the hearing notice. It is standard for the Council to submit questions to nominees. I request your response to the following questions no later than close of business Friday, January 3, 2020.

1. Please provide a copy of the Financial Disclosure Statement you filed with the Office of Campaign Finance or the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. If you have not filed a Financial Disclosure Statement, please provide answers to questions 2-8 in lieu of that statement.
2. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.
3. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.
4. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.
5. Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000. Do not include loans from a federal or state insured or regulated financial institution, or from any business enterprise regularly engaged in the business of providing revolving credit or installment accounts.
6. Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.
7. Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.
8. Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.



9. Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member, and include the term of service for each.
10. Please list any other boards (e.g. Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.
11. Do you have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested? If so, please provide documentation of attempts to pay the amount owed or to resolve the disputed claim.
12. Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in performance of your duties as a member of the Commission?
13. Please describe any local political activity (i.e. the District of Columbia local elections or campaigns) that you have engaged in over the past five years, including any campaign contributions to a local candidate or political action committee.
14. Are you registered with any local, state, or federal government to lobby? If so, list the jurisdiction(s) in which you are registered.
15. Do you understand how much time will be required of you to serve on the Commission and do you commit to spend that time?
16. Why have you agreed to serve, and how do you plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during your time on the Commission? Include in your answer what you believe should be the priorities of the Commission and specific challenges you see for the agency.
17. Please discuss any past and present experiences not already mentioned that you believe are relevant to support your appointment as a member of the Commission.

At the January 9<sup>th</sup> hearing, you will be asked to make an opening statement indicating your interest in serving as a member of the Commission. The testimony of persons interested in supporting your nomination is helpful but not necessary. Interested parties may call the Committee office to register to testify (724-8196) or, alternatively, may submit written comments to the Committee regarding your nomination via letter mail or e-mail (COW@dccouncil.us).

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me or Peter Johnson on my staff at (202) 724-8083.

Sincerely,



Phil Mendelson  
Chairman

enc.

PM/pj

**CORA MASTERS BARRY--RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON THE APPOINTMENT  
TO THE COMMISSION ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

1. Please provide a copy of the Financial Disclosure Statement you filed with the Office of Campaign Finance or the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. If you have not filed a Financial Disclosure Statement, please provide answers to questions 2-8 in lieu of that statement.

2. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.

**None.**

3. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.

**None.**

4. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.

**The Recreation Wish List Committee.**

**The Recreation Wish List Committee (RWLC) is a 501 C3 organization serving children and their families primarily in Wards 8 and 7. The RWLC offers after school and summer educational enrichment programs; a tennis program to develop competitive athletes; and a range of other cultural, science and technology, and entrepreneurship programs which enable youth to be competitive in today's global society.**

**I serve as the CEO/Founder and a member of the Board of Directors.**

5. Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000. Do not include loans from a federal or state insured or regulated financial institution, or from any business enterprise regularly engaged in the business of providing revolving credit or installment accounts.

**None**

6. Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.

**161 Raleigh Street, SE. Washington, DC 20032**

7. Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.

**None.**

8. Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., The National Council of Negro Women, Inc., and The National Coalition for Black Civic Participation**

9. Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member and include the term of service for each.

**The District of Columbia Boxing and Wrestling Commission – Chairman, 1980 -1987**

10. Please list any other boards (e.g. Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.

**The National Coalition for Black Civic Participation**

11. Do you have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested? If so, please provide documentation of attempts to pay the amount owed or to resolve the disputed claim.

**Had an ongoing status dispute with the Internal Revenue Service. To date all matters are being resolved;**

12. Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in performance of your duties as a member of the Commission?

**No.**

13. Please describe any local political activity (i.e. the District of Columbia local elections or campaigns) that you have engaged in over the past five years, including any campaign contributions to a local candidate or political action committee.

**The following are campaign contributions made to local candidates:**

**Mr. Marcus Goodwin, Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie and Mrs. Dionne Bussey Reeder.**

14. Are you registered with any local, state, or federal government to lobby? If so, list the jurisdiction(s) in which you are registered.

**No.**

15. Do you understand how much time will be required of you to serve on the Commission and do you commit to spend that time?

**Yes. As an individual who has worked with a broad range of public and private organizations throughout my career, I understand that the commitment of one's time and providing dedicated service are the most important assets that one can bring to the table. I plan to fully engage with the Commission and spend the time required to be an effective Commissioner.**

16. Why have you agreed to serve, and how do you plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during your time on the Commission? Include in your answer what you believe should be the priorities of the Commission and specific challenges you see for the agency.

**I plan to work collaboratively with the Commission to ensure that the oversight processes, and policies in grant making, education, and professional development for which the Board has responsibility-- serve the City and all residents in the most effective manner.**

**I believe the Commission must focus on inclusiveness and diversity in public funding of the arts and culture in the District of Columbia. The Commission must continue its role in per capita funding which demonstrates its commitment to invest in the city's arts and humanities community and be a voice that welcomes participation by all entities seeking support.**

**It is incumbent on the Commission to promote transparency and equity in its operations and competitive processes.**

17. Please discuss any past and present experiences not already mentioned that you believe are relevant to support your appointment as a member of the Commission.

**I am a champion of people and communities. I believe that our City can only be as great as its smallest part. In my 30+ years of experience of working with and providing leadership in government; institutions of higher learning; businesses and nonprofits in the District and throughout the country, I have been dedicated to uplifting communities, understanding and meeting the needs of citizens, and building pathways to opportunity and success. My voice on the Commission will be one of compassion, reason, and experience in bringing people and resources together from all segments of the arts and humanities community to serve our residents and promote a rich and culturally diverse City.**

**MICHAEL C. ROGERS TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE  
NOMINATION OF CORA MASTERS BARRY**

**PR 23-582 Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry  
Confirmation Resolution of 2019**

**January 9, 2020**

**Greetings Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee of the Whole:**

**I am Michael C. Rogers. I have known Cora Masters Barry since serving as the District of Columbia's City Administrator in 1995.**

**Cora Masters Barry possesses a passion and unique skill set in implementing programs that impact communities and our youth. I have observed her work ethic and zeal in creating the Recreation Wish List Committee first-hand, and I have watched through the years as the Recreation Wish List Committee has flourished into one of the most successful nonprofits in the City.**

**I have served on numerous nonprofit Boards, and I have found that Cora Master Barry's is among the most committed, resourceful and dynamic nonprofit executives with whom I have worked.**

**Her contributions to the arts and humanities, can clearly be seen through the prism of her work with Blacks 'N Wax. This theatrical production is not only an educational vehicle for participating student scholars and the public at large, but it is also a source of entertainment—which boasts of standing room only crowds at its performances. It is the genius and fortitude of Cora Masters Barry that ensures this quality theatrical production occurs each year.**

**Cora Masters Barry has her finger on the pulse of how small nonprofits can make significant contributions in the space in which they occupy. She excels in engaging and listening to stakeholders; marshalling resources and commitments to accomplish work; and most importantly—in inspiring those around her to work together to get the job done. She is by training an educator and historian—embracing the sharing of knowledge. She is a champion of community. She is committed to helping young people realize their fullest potential. She is a great supporter of arts and culture in our City—a true renaissance woman.**

**Cora Masters Barry will be an excellent addition to the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.**

January 9, 2020

Good Morning Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember White and distinguished members of the Council. I am pleased to speak before this body today to endorse the appointment of Ms. Cora Masters Barry to the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities. This commission, as the leading voice for arts and culture in the city, elevating the impact of the arts and humanities locally, nationally and internationally – that voice is severely colored by its lack of diversity. This appointment of Ms. Barry goes a long way toward balancing the city's approach to advancing this very important platform.

As a long-term business owner and resident of Congress Heights (the Soul of City), Chair of the Congress Heights Partnership and President of the Congress Heights Community Association, I am reminded of the significant gaps in capacity that exists between arts producing organizations EOTR and those west of the river. Despite executive producing the only Art All Night event in the ward, that brings thousands of visitors to our commercial corridors to highlight the artistic talent of local creatives, facilitating our Soul of the City summer music series, and public art installations, we have wrestled with a process that refuses even to acknowledge that we are an arts producing organization. I share this experience, not for sympathy or action, but to highlight the fact that despite having more than 30 years' operating a non-profit, decades of clean audits, we have been unable to gain support for any of our public art projects. It is important to understand that IF a well-established CDC is unable to navigate the processes, can we expect some of our emerging creatives to navigate it successfully?

In order to evaluate and initiate action on matters relating to the arts and humanities and encourage the development of programs that promote progress in the arts and humanities, the commission MUST have leadership that is BOLD. But, more importantly, it needs leadership that UNDERSTANDS – understands the needs of our community, the importance of preserving our culture, and it cannot be AFRAID. Ms. Barry encompasses the key characteristics that make her an ideal candidate for this commission. Ms. Barry exemplifies BOLDNESS. Through her work from the boxing commission to her current passion of the Recreation Wish List Committee, she has consistently shown that she is bold in vision and



implementation. Moreover, Ms. Barry understands this city. Her understanding of citywide issues, with a special attention to those EOTR, uniquely qualify her to represent this city well. Her understanding of marginalized communities, like most of those EOTR makes this nomination, in tennis speak, an ACE!

I strongly encourage this committee to confirm Ms. Barry. Her presence on a commission with the mission to provide grant funds, programs and educational activities that encourage diverse artistic expressions and learning opportunities, so that all District of Columbia residents and visitors can experience the rich culture of our city is necessary, NOW.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica T. Ray, President  
Congress Heights Community Training & Development Corporation  
3215 Martin L. King, Jr. Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF CORA MASTERS BARRY**

**PR 23-582 Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry  
Confirmation Resolution of 2019**

**January 9, 2020**

I am Cora Masters Barry. I am the former First Lady of our great city, the founder and CEO of the Recreation Wish List Committee and Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, and a proud resident of Ward 8.

I am honored to have been nominated by Mayor Bowser to serve on the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee of the Whole for considering PR 23-582, my Confirmation Resolution. We have worked together on many issues of importance to our City. I look forward to continuing that relationship.

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities has had a dynamic history. Its importance, value and impact on our city, residents of the arts and cultural community, and visitors must never be underestimated.

My late husband—Mayor and Councilmember was a founding supporter and champion of the mission of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities. He firmly believed “that while adequate resources are essential, it was also vital that our *arts community* knows that “its government cares”. The “arts” cannot just be about institutions and galleries. ***“The arts must be about the engagement and incorporation of neighborhoods and everyday people into the arts and culture of our city”.***

Arts-related programs and activities must be available to diverse and previously unserved constituencies across the city. Local artists and small neighbor and community organizations as well as large traditional institutions must be supported equally in order to have a vibrant and diverse cultural presence.

I am here today, because I want to ensure that the arts and culture flourish and embrace every ward, quadrant, and segment of our City’s population. As a former twenty-one-year tenured Professor of Political Science at the University of the

District of Columbia, I helped young people evolve—expanding their world view and encouraging them to explore a variety of political strategies and tools to effect change.

The arts and humanities are one such tool. They can be a driving force of social change. They can give voice to the politically or socially disenfranchised, and influence society by changing opinions and shaping values. The arts are essential to defining who we are, what we believe, and how the future will reflect our deeds. In other words, the essence of art is communication.

I have witnessed the transformative nature of arts and culture on the human spirit and in broadening horizons. The Recreation Wish List Committee's Blacks 'N Wax Theater Production is both a local and national phenomenon.

Performances have included: an annual appearance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Art's Millennium Stage; the White House; the National Museum of African American Culture; the Cicely Tyson Community School of Performing and Fine Arts in New Jersey; and Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, to name a few.

Each year, Blacks 'N Wax Theater is also showcased in our community at THEARC, and we are honored to be a regular invitee to the John A. Wilson Building for Black History month. This year's invitation by Councilmember Robert White will mark our 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of participation.

Blacks 'N Wax Theater demonstrates the powerful impact on our student scholars—who become masters of the stage and great storytellers; and the equally significant impact on patrons who gain new insights and perspectives on pivotal moments in the history of our nation.

I am pleased to learn that the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities awarded nearly \$25 Million in competitive grants for Fiscal Year 2020—a record breaking number; and that these grants support arts and humanities projects, nonprofit organizations and individual practitioners across the City.

I am also pleased to know that the Commission on Arts and Humanities continues to be ranked number one in funding per capita among the 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States.

If confirmed as a new member, I will bring to the Commission the same intellectual rigor and commitment to equity and inclusion that have served me

throughout my career. When I became the first woman in the United States to serve as Chair of a Boxing and Wrestling Commission, I utilized that platform to ensure fairness in rules and processes; and to address gender inequities so that women could be included ringside as medical professionals and judges. These were not popular things to do, but they were the right things to do.

In serving the Commission, I will be committed to working collaboratively to make certain that the oversight processes, and policies in grantmaking, education, and professional development for which the Board has responsibility-- serve the City and all residents well.

I will be committed to ensuring that there is a level playing field for all individuals and organizations in the arts and cultural communities seeking the support of the Commission, and that all have confidence in the work of the Commission as being fair, transparent and professional.

As a member of the Commission, I will honor the trust placed in me so that our rich culture is not only sustained but amplified. History will be our judge.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my nomination. I welcome any questions that you might have.

# MEMORANDUM

**From:** Reggie Van Lee [reggievanlee@gmail.com](mailto:reggievanlee@gmail.com)  
**To:** The Committee of the Whole  
Attn: Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Council of the District of Columbia  
**Date:** December 30, 2019 at 5:02:03 PM CST  
**Subject:** CAH Nomination

I could not be more excited to provide my strongest endorsement for Mrs. Cora Masters Barry as a nominee for the Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Many speak of the transformative power of the arts in the lives of human beings, in general, and in the lives of children and young people, in particular. And, as an avid patron of the arts — a current Trustee for the Kennedy Center, former Chair of Washington Performing Arts, former Vice Chair of the Washington Ballet, a current Trustee of the Studio Museum in Harlem, Lead Benefactor for the renovation and re-opening of the Howard Theater, a current Trustee of the Juilliard School, a current Trustee of the Public Theater and a Founding Donor for the National Museum for African American History and Culture — I have not seen many programs which surpass the work of Cora Barry in transforming children and their families and communities.

The work of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center (and especially the “Blacks in Wax” program) has been so inspiring to me that not only have I served as Executive Producer of Blacks In Wax for the last 8 years but I brought the program to the Kennedy Center 6 years ago to ensure that a broader community was exposed to and benefited from that program. To watch these amazing young people from Southeast Washington evolve from children reluctant to learn their parts and perform before any audience to becoming ‘stars’ on the stage of the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center performing perfectly before an audience of over 600 international visitors, continues to amaze me. But this is the work of Cora Barry and her outstanding staff at SETLC. The prospect of Cora Barry spreading her genius, stamina, dedication, and passion for the arts and what it can do for human beings to a yet broader DC community is extremely exciting! Moreover, Cora Barry is a constant physical presence at many arts events in DC. We have attended performances at Washington Performing Arts, the Washington Ballet, the Kennedy Center, THEARC, and the Howard Theatre, to name a few. Cora is an arts enthusiast, through and through.

For these reasons and more, I cannot think of a better nominee for the Commission on the Arts and Humanities and I provide my unequivocal endorsement for Mrs. Cora Masters Barry.

Enthusiastically,  
Reginald Van Lee





**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL**

Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 4  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 724-8026

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chairman Phil Mendelson

**FROM:** Nicole L. Streeter, General Counsel *NLS*

**DATE:** January 20, 2020

**RE:** Legal sufficiency determination for Proposed  
Resolution 23-582, the Commission on the Arts and  
Humanities Cora Masters Barry Confirmation  
Resolution of 2020

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The measure is legally and technically sufficient for Council consideration.

The proposed resolution would confirm the appointment of Ms. Cora Masters Barry as a member with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities established by section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act, effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), for a term to end June 30, 2021.

I am available if you have any questions.



1 **COMMITTEE PRINT**  
2 Committee of the Whole  
3 January 21, 2020  
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6

7 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

8  
9 23-582  
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12 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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15  
16 To confirm the appointment of Ms. Cora Masters Barry as a member of the Commission on the  
17 Arts and Humanities.  
18

19 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
20 resolution may be cited as the "Commission on the Arts and Humanities Cora Masters Barry  
21 Confirmation Resolution of 2020".

22 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia confirms the appointment of:  
23

24 Ms. Cora Masters Barry  
25 Raleigh Street, SE  
26 Washington, DC 20032  
27 (Ward 8)  
28

29 as a member with specific interest, ability, or experience in the humanities of the Commission on  
30 the Arts and Humanities, pursuant to section 4 of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities Act,  
31 effective October 21, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-22; D.C. Official Code § 39-203), for a term to end June  
32 30, 2021.

33 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,  
34 upon its adoption, to the nominee and to the Office of the Mayor.

35 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.