



FY18 Budget Recommendations (5/7/17)

Note: These recommendations were drafted by the Steering Committee, with input from the Affordable Housing and Criminal Justice teams. They will be presented to the membership for debate and vote at the May 9 meetup.

Transparency

The Council Chairman should publish the revised budget to allow at least 7 business days for the public to review the budget before the Committee of the Whole (COW) public hearing on May 12. In the past, the Chairman's budget has been published hours before the first COW public hearing, allowing little opportunity for meaningful testimony.

Affordable Housing:

The Council should take the following minimal steps to address the crisis of affordable housing in DC, with the understanding that these are band-aids, rather than long-term solutions:

- expand the commitment to fund public housing: acquire additional public housing and provide \$25 million a year for public housing repairs;
- invest \$150 million a year for the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), part of which should fully fund the recommendations of Housing Preservation Strike Force to preserve affordable housing; furthermore, increase to 50% (from 40%) the amount of HPTF money targeted to benefit DC residents earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income;
- address homelessness by funding \$30 million in rental assistance for people experiencing homelessness and \$12.2 million a year for permanent supportive housing for singles and families.
- hold slumlords accountable by including in the Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) budget: (1) additional funding for the Nuisance Abatement Fund to fix housing code violations in vacant/abandoned units that pose serious risks to neighbors; (2) funding for additional full-time DCRA housing inspector positions; and (3) funding for increased DCRA enforcement to refer serious housing code violations to the Office of Attorney General for legal action.

Criminal Justice

NEAR (Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results) Act: Fully fund and implement the NEAR Act to reflect both the letter and the spirit of the law, and establish a new relationship between the community and the police. In particular, the budget must include \$6 million in recurring funds for the Office of Neighborhood Engagement & Safety to work with high-risk individuals, use public health methods to interrupt and reduce violence, and collect better data on these vital issues of community health and well-being.

Paid Family Leave

Fund the additional \$20 million required to fully fund the start-up costs for the Paid Family Leave program the Council enacted last year. After two years of debating the bill, the Council should stand by its own law and not allow the Big Business lobby to exercise veto power.

Revenue

- Support Councilmember David Grosso's Reserve Fund Improvement Amendment Act to align calculation of the local cash reserve funds with the federal reserve funds. By providing an additional \$90 million in FY18 for the Housing Production Trust Fund and school modernization, the capital budget can more easily provide the additional \$20 million required for start-up costs for Paid Family Leave (Note 1).
- Maintain significant progress towards a fairer tax code by eliminating planned cuts in the estate tax and business franchise tax that further accentuate income inequality. This will yield \$40 million in recurring funds for FY18 (and more than \$200 million over the next 4 years) that can go towards public housing repairs, housing vouchers, and the NEAR act (Note 2).

Notes:

1. DCFPI post: <http://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2.13.17-Grosso-Surplus-Bill.pdf>
2. CFO estimates: http://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/release_content/attachments/February%202017%20Revenue%20Estimates_rev.pdf