



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

January 28, 2021

Councilmember Charles Allen
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 110
Washington, DC 20004
callen@dccouncil.us

Mr. Michael Bennett
Chair
DC Board of Elections
1015 Half Street SE, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20003
director@dcboe.org

RE: Filling ANC Vacancies During the COVID Public Health Emergency

Dear Councilmember Allen and Chair Bennett,

At its regular meeting on January 27, 2021, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of seven commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Omictin and seconded by Commissioner Causey, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners serve essential roles in our communities, providing critical advice to agencies, amplifying community voices on public policy decisions, and acting as the most direct line of access to DC government for residents,

WHEREAS, ANC 2A presently has a vacancy in single member district 2A08, which inhibits that district’s residents’ rights to direct representation in the ANC and places an undue burden on the Commissioners from surrounding districts to handle the business of the vacant district,

WHEREAS, there are vacancies in several other single member districts (4B05, 5A04, 7E03, 7F07, 8B07, and 8E03), none of which can be filled during a public health emergency under DC Code 1-309.06(d)(1), which states: “No [Advisory Neighborhood Commission] vacancy shall be filled if it occurs ... during a period of time for which a public health emergency has been declared by the Mayor ...”,

WHEREAS, 2A08’s population is almost entirely students of the George Washington University, a constituency that has historically been underrepresented on ANC 2A,



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WHEREAS, the vacancy in 7F07, a seat representing mostly residents of the DC Jail, occurred because the candidate who had received the most write-in votes for the position, Joel Caston, had been erroneously registered to vote in Ward 8,

WHEREAS, Joel Caston notes that a jail employee had instructed him to use his former address in Ward 8, and that there is a significant lack of accurate and accessible elections information being distributed to the voters at both the DC Jail and the Harriet Tubman Women’s Shelter, and

WHEREAS, continued vacancies disenfranchise residents in districts lacking a commissioner, diminishing their voice in critical neighborhood decisions.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A calls on the DC Council, in consultation with the DC Board of Elections, to eliminate statutory language that prohibits filling vacancies in a public health emergency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A calls on the DC Board of Elections and the DC Council to make reforms to sustain representation, especially in single member districts with unique constituencies (such as single-member districts whose boundaries include university dormitories or jails), such as:

- Greater information sharing and communications for residents and potential candidates to fully understand elections procedures and requirements, especially regarding residency, and
- Specialized support and training for commissioners with technological or logistical barriers to attending meetings and fulfilling the duties of an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A designates Commissioner Yannik Omictin, ANC 2A01, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

Commissioners Yannik Omictin (2A01@anc.dc.gov) and Jeri Epstein (2A06@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Jeri Epstein
Chairperson