



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

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

November 30, 2017

Councilmember Anita Bonds
Chair, Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 404
Washington, DC 20004
abonds@dccouncil.us

RE: DC Council Bill B22-0348 – the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission Candidate Proof of Residence Amendment Act of 2017”

Dear Councilmember Bonds,

At its regular meeting on November 15, 2017, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With six of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Zhurbinskiy and seconded by Commissioner Harmon, to adopt the attached testimony regarding DC Council Bill B22-0348 – the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission Candidate Proof of Residence Amendment Act of 2017.”

Commissioners Eve Zhurbinskiy (2A08@anc.dc.gov) and Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Chairperson



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Hearing on DC Council Bill B22-0348 – the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission Candidate Proof of Residence Amendment Act of 2017”

Testimony by ANC 2A

Members of the Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization:

My name is Eve Zhurbinskiy and I am the commissioner for Single Member District 2A08, as well as a student at the George Washington University. I am here to testify on behalf of ANC 2A regarding DC Council Bill B22-0348 – the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission Candidate Proof of Residence Amendment Act of 2017.”

While ANC 2A appreciates the need to ensure that candidates reside in the district they seek to represent, the legislation as written will lead to the disenfranchisement of college students who live in university-provided housing on campus.

Two of the eight commissioners on ANC 2A – including myself – are George Washington University students who represent districts that consist mostly or solely of university-provided housing. Further, other neighborhoods have Single Member Districts that are solely or mostly comprised of university housing. These include 2E04 and 2E08 in Georgetown, 5A04 by Catholic University of America, 3D07 by American University, and 1B10 by Howard University. I should add that the seat by American has been vacant for several years, indicating the challenges of recruiting and engaging college students to become involved in community affairs.

Because college students move between residence halls frequently, they often lack two proofs of residency. Like several former student commissioners, I do not maintain a DC ID because I have moved numerous times over the past several years, including three times alone in 2017 to maintain residency in my SMD. My bank accounts are still registered to my parents’ address in order to avoid the hassle of changing the address three times a year. Currently, my only proof of residency is a form offered by GW that states all my addresses at the university since I matriculated. I pay the university a lump sum for housing at the start of the semester or summer, and thus do not have any utility, rent, or mortgage documents.

Under this legislation, the easiest way for most students to obtain a second proof of residency – other than changing a bank statement multiple times a year – would be to go to the doctor and have the bill sent to their university address. Let’s be clear: no one should have to seek medical attention to get a proof of residency to run for office. The unintentional consequence of this bill will be the disenfranchisement of students.

Further, a proof of residency is not currently required to seek any office in DC. ANC 2A believes that placing the burden of obtaining a proof of residency on ANC candidates and not candidates for Council, Mayor, Attorney General, and other offices is an uneven application of the principle of ensuring that every elected official resides in the district they represent.



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Thus, ANC 2A asks that the Council remedy the student disenfranchisement issue by either exempting candidates with university-provided housing in their districts from being required to provide two proofs of residency, or by requiring only one proof of residency. ANC 2A also suggests that the Council examine requiring one proof of residency for candidates seeking any office in the District.