



HILLCREST COMMUNITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

"Working Together for a Better Community"

www.hillcrestDC.com

3319 Alabama Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20020 phone: (202) 575-6101

To: COUNCILMEMBER PHIL MENDELSON, CHAIRPERSON COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
and COUNCILMEMBER CAROL SCHWARTZ, CHAIRPERSON COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
WORKS AND THE ENVIRONMENT and OTHER COUNCILMEMBERS

From: VINCENT M. SPAULDING, PRESIDENT, HCCA

Date: June 28, 2006

Subject: Bill 16-666, "Litter Control Administration Amendment Act of 2006".

My name is Vincent Spaulding, President of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association (HCCA) and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for Single Member District 7B04. I also served as the Clean City Coordinator for the District of Columbia from February 1999 to October 2002. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to testify in support of Bill 16-666, the "Litter Control Administration Amendment Act of 2006". This bill introduced by Councilmember Brown and co-sponsored by Councilmember Graham amends the "Litter Control Administration Amendment Act of 1985" to provide that the Metropolitan Police Department and the Department of Public Works shall have the authority to issue tickets to persons violating the District's litter control laws.

I support Bill 16-666 because it will give the police the authority to write tickets for littering which they currently are not doing. The Department of Public Works has the primary responsibility for enforcement of anti-littering laws but don't have sufficient enforcement resources to serve as an adequate deterrent to littering. The over 3500 DC police officers who patrol our streets should also have the authority and responsibility to write littering tickets, same as the police officers in Virginia and Maryland.

The visual image of the District of Columbia is being adversely impacted by uncontrolled littering, illegal dumping, unlawful posting of advertisement signs on trees and lamps, graffiti, trucks hauling trash with out protective coverings, etc. Legislation, programs, and initiatives designed to discourage the foregoing illegal activities are needed to encourage community involvement and respect of the public space. Giving police the authority to write tickets for littering would allow them to fine people, for example, who toss a fast-food bag, newspaper, or bottles out of a car window or leave a beer bottle on the curb. Taking action to stop these types of littering activities fall outside of the role and primary responsibility of DPW for enforcement of anti-littering laws. DPW deals primarily with littering after the occurrence versus littering while in progress, which would become the role of the DC Police Department, if this bill is passed. Litter on the street often ends up in our area waterways, and officials estimate that about 70 tons of trash are removed every month from the Anacostia River, due, in large measure to "littering on the streets". In addition to stepped up anti-littering enforcement, the following steps should be taken to reduce littering:

1. Implementing an environmental education program in the DC School system that focuses on anti-littering, solid waste management, recycling and community beautification.
2. – The Department of Public Works should have additional funds programmed to allow the hiring of sanitation enforcement personnel at the level needed to adequately enforce sanitation regulations, e.g. currently there are less than 30 inspectors for the entire city; we need at least 10 inspectors per city ward. Once MPD officers are given the tools (i.e. enforceable anti-litter laws), they should be encouraged to enforce them and **a violation ticket should be identified/developed for their use**. The penalties should be in line with those of the surrounding jurisdictions and enforceable on non-DC residents as well as DC residents, similar to traffic tickets.
3. Communicate better with the news media about the seriousness of littering and the fines that will be levied. When a "litter bug" is convicted, make every effort to publicize the case, letting other potential litterers know how they will be dealt with.

Littering in the District of Columbia is an ongoing problem that is in need of stronger actions to abate. The current anti-littering enforcement structure is not sufficient to serve as an adequate deterrent to littering. An increase in the number of persons responsible for enforcing littering laws is consequently needed. With the support of the City Council by passing Bill 16-666, the residents of the District of Columbia can receive some relief. I encourage the City Council to take the stronger action facilitated by this bill to discourage littering in the District of Columbia. Thank you for this opportunity to submit a statement in support of subject bill.

Very respectfully,

Vincent M. Spaulding, R.A.
President, HCCA