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**Statement of the Council for Court Excellence Before  
the Committee on Housing  
Performance Oversight Hearing on the  
Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions**

*February 12, 2026*

Thank you, Chairperson White and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to submit this testimony. CCE is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with the mission to enhance justice in the District of Columbia. For more than 40 years, CCE has worked to make D.C.'s unique legal systems more just, equitable, and accountable to the community through research and policy analysis, convening diverse stakeholders, and creating educational resources for the public. Please note that in accordance with our policy, no judicial member of CCE participated in the formulation or approval of this testimony. This testimony does not reflect the specific views of, or endorsement by, any judicial member of CCE.

For 26 years, The Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) has supported the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) across the District by providing expertise in a variety of areas. They are the main source advice for Commissioners and provide technical, administrative, and financial reporting assistance. OANC's vision includes ensuring that each Commissioner has equitable access and support. Despite this vision, 7F08 and that district's commissioner often do not receive equitable treatment and face many barriers to effectively servicing their constituents. This testimony will cover ways we believe that this elected Commissioner could more effectively fulfill their position.

Originally, D.C. Jail residents were a part of district 7F07 when it was created in 2012. In 2020, D.C. extended enfranchisement to all incarcerated individuals to include those with a felony conviction;<sup>i</sup> shortly thereafter, a new ANC district, 7F08, was created which included all jail residents.<sup>ii</sup> Since then, two residents of the D.C. Jail have been elected as the commissioners for ANC 7F08.

At this point in time, the Commissioner for ANC 7F08 can only testify before D.C. Council virtually via Zoom. While this is more than other jail residents can do, as they are only allowed to submit written testimony and are **not even allowed to watch hearings**, we believe this is not sufficient for several reasons. First, it is well researched that in person interactions are more impactful than virtual interactions.<sup>iii</sup> Furthermore, we know that Council values direct

engagement with all D.C. elected officials and should prioritize co-equal opportunities to engage directly with this ANC Commissioner.

CCE would recommend that the ANC for 7F08 should be allowed to testify at all Council hearings directly concerning their constituents in person. Such in-person interactions are indeed possible; currently, the Department of Corrections (DOC) residents are transported outside of the D.C. Jail for various medical appointments and court appearances, so it is difficult to conceive what security barrier exists that prevent them from transporting the 7F08 Commissioner to the Wilson Building for testimony. We hope the OANC will prioritize working with this Council and DOC to ensure that all of their commissioners, including the representative of 7F08, be able to provide in-person testimony.

Without a doubt, the issues that ANC 7F08's Commissioner is likely to raise with the Council are unique – and uniquely valuable, in light of the often-hidden nature of their constituents' daily lives. This makes their full engagement even more important. Of course, one person cannot represent the experiences and views of all those living within the walls of the D.C. Jail, especially in three minutes. Recently, Councilmember Pinto introduced the Ensuring Access and Supporting Engagement for DOC Residents Act of 2025 (EASE). This bill would codify the ability of DOC facilities residents to testify before the D.C. Council.

However, in the meantime, we would like to ensure that the Commissioner for ANC 7F08 can be as effective as possible in representing their constituents. In terms of resources, ANCs at the D.C. Jail have received a phone, desk, and computer with which to conduct their duties.<sup>iv</sup> This is not sufficient for them to meaningfully report on the conditions their constituents face, making it more difficult for them to advocate on their behalf. CCE would like the OANC to ensure that the Commissioner for ANC7F08 is provided with a device that can record audio and video. In this way, the Commissioner could record the testimony of, or interviews with, other jail residents. Additionally, this may provide an opportunity for the Commissioner, who has taken the oath of office in D.C., to document examples of conditions issues at the jail. OANC could work with the Commissioner, Council, and DOC to determine if these recordings could be made available unredacted (or with limited redaction to protect privacy) to the members of the D.C. Council, and versions redacted to ensure jail security could be submitted as publicly-available testimony.

ANCs are an integral part of D.C. and how residents can hold the District accountable. These improvements would ensure that one of the most overlooked voices, those of incarcerated residents, are properly uplifted. Thank you for your continued interest and concern, and please know we will be happy to assist you and the Council in any way to ensure that OANC is able to fulfill their vision of all ANCs being able to equitably serve their constituents.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/laws/23-277>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/laws/24-148>

<sup>iii</sup> Roger Dooley, Virtual Meetings Are Less Engaging Than In-Person, Study Confirms, Forbes, Dec. 12, 2023. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rogerdooley/2023/12/12/zoom-meetings-less-engaging-than-in-person-brain-study-confirms/>

<sup>iv</sup> Myles Walker, Incarcerated Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Transferred Out of Washington, D.C., AFRO The Black Media Authority, July 29, 2023 <https://afro.com/incarcerated-advisory-neighborhood-commissioner-transferred-out-of-washington-d-c/>