

March 23, 2026

Dear Chairman Comer:

I write to respectfully request a coordinated federal oversight review of the ongoing financial mismanagement, program failures, and documented ethics violations within the government of the District of Columbia. As the nation's capital, Washington, DC occupies a unique constitutional position. Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the United States Constitution, Congress retains ultimate legislative and fiscal authority over the District. With that authority comes both the ability and responsibility to ensure that taxpayer resources are managed transparently, lawfully, and effectively. However, over the past several decades following the establishment of DC Home Rule, the District has experienced recurring cycles of fiscal instability, ethics scandals, and operational failures across multiple administrations, agencies, and elected offices. While individual incidents vary, the pattern reflects ongoing leadership weaknesses rather than isolated misconduct. Recent examples illustrate the scale and continuity of concern:

### **Public Safety, Operational Failures, and Rampant Spending**

- In Fiscal Year 2023, the Metropolitan Police Department exceeded its approved budget by approximately \$130.7 million, spending \$642.9 million against an authorized \$512.2 million, largely driven by uncontrolled overtime expenditures.
- During the same period, violence-prevention and youth agencies operated substantial budgets, including approximately \$28.5 million for the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) and more than \$90 million for the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).
- FY 2025 automated traffic enforcement generated approximately \$267 million in fines, originally justified as funding for the District's Vision Zero safety initiative. Significant portions of these revenues were ultimately absorbed into the District's general fund rather than transparently tied to stated safety outcomes.
- The 2026 Potomac Interceptor sewer failure resulted in an emergency repair cost of roughly \$30 million, nearly double initial estimates and outside normal maintenance budgeting, raising concerns about deferred infrastructure maintenance and reactive emergency spending practices.
- Snow removal budgeting has repeatedly demonstrated chronic underestimation, including a FY2026 allocation of \$1.21 million that was nearly half exhausted early in the season, continuing a decades-long pattern requiring emergency contingency withdrawals following major storms.

## **Documented Corruption and Ethics Violations**

Since Home Rule's inception, District governance has been marked by recurring corruption and ethics failures resulting in convictions, indictments, resignations, and formal investigations, including:

- A \$48 million long-running fraudulent tax refund scheme.
- Multiple elected officials investigated and/or convicted for bribery, fraud, or misuse of office.
- Federal bribery indictments involving public contracts and government programs.
- Ethics investigations related to executive leadership and procurement practices.

## **DC DOGE: Coordinated Oversight Using Existing Authorities**

To address these consistent challenges, I have advanced the concept of DC DOGE, a District accountability framework designed to align and coordinate existing federal oversight capabilities already authorized under law. This initiative may not require new appropriations either. Instead, it would align existing federal oversight authorities to:

- Conduct coordinated audits of major District expenditures and revenue programs to ensure lawful and intended use of public funds.
- Identify duplicative, wasteful, or ineffective spending practices and recommend corrective structural reforms.
- Refer findings of fraud, misuse of funds, or unlawful conduct to appropriate investigative and prosecutorial authorities for review and enforcement action.
- Restore transparency and confidence.

Federal entities already positioned to participate in such coordination include:

- U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
- Government Accountability Office
- Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General
- U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia

Because these authorities already exist, implementation could occur through coordinated oversight directives rather than the creation of a new federally funded agency. Therefore and accordingly, I respectfully request consideration of: a coordinated federal oversight review of major District spending programs and revenue streams, and an assessment of

whether existing oversight mechanisms are being fully utilized to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to defend the U.S. Constitution.

Respectfully,

**Lori Furstenberg**