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**Statement of the District Task Force on Jails & Justice
Before the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety of the
Council of the District of Columbia**

**Performance Oversight Hearing for the
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice**

February 22, 2023

Good morning, Chairwoman Pinto, and members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. My name is Shelley Broderick and I am here today in my capacity as the Chair of the District Task Force on Jails & Justice (Task Force). First, I want to begin by saying I am looking forward to working closely with you as the new D.C. Council Representative to the Task Force. As you know, the Task Force is an independent advisory body dedicated to redefining the District's approach to incarceration by building city-wide engagement, centering the voices of those with lived experiences, understanding community priorities, and exploring the use and design of secure detention and community-based solutions. Since 2019, the Task Force has worked to build a humane, equitable approach to the criminal legal system in Washington, D.C. that prioritizes prevention and care, and reimagines accountability through a rehabilitative lens, to create safe and thriving communities.

I am here today to urge the Committee to support, and hold accountable, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice (DMPSJ) in meaningfully advocating and planning for restoring local control to the District. The DMPSJ must serve as a leader on this issue to ensure

the health, safety, and dignity of our incarcerated neighbors, while also working to undo the harm disproportionately inflicted on D.C.'s Black residents by our criminal legal system.

In December 2022, the United States Parole Commission (USPC) was once again reauthorized with the passage of the *Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill*, signed by President Biden. However, unlike last year's two year extension, the USPC was only reauthorized for one year and will sunset on October 31, 2023. We are already two months into 2023, and the District can't delay action any further. District leaders and advocates are looking to the DMPSJ to articulate a plan for restoring local control of parole.

Deputy Mayor Appiah will not be starting from scratch. Under Deputy Mayor Geldart's tenure, D.C. began making some – though slow – progress in mapping out a plan for restoring local control of parole. Additionally, the Task Force's work can – and should – be used as a guidepost when determining the qualities and values of a new paroling authority. Just over two years ago, the Task Force published its [Phase II report](#) in which we crafted specific recommendations for the qualities needed in a new, local paroling authority. While the Task Force did not make a recommendation on the structure of this paroling authority, we recommended that the paroling authority reduce incarceration while increasing public safety and accountability, have strong local control over the way paroling decisions are made, with decisions reflecting the values of D.C. residents, and strong protections for people seeking a parole grant or facing revocation of parole or supervised release. We also recommended the paroling authority embody the humane, equitable approach to the criminal legal system articulated by the full Task Force.

D.C. must establish a local paroling authority that takes a public health approach to community safety and incarceration, is fair in its administration, treats everyone involved in the

process with dignity, and encourages restorative practices and trauma-informed healing-centered practices. Others, such as the Justice Policy Institute, D.C. Reentry Task Force, and ReThink Justice DC coalition have also published reports that detail the qualities needed in a new paroling authority, as well as made recommendations on what a new paroling authority should look like and how much it would cost. The DMPSJ must be a leader in ensuring the District establishes a local paroling authority that encompasses these values and qualities.

Earlier this month, the Task Force formally invited Deputy Mayor Appiah to participate as a member of the Task Force, an invitation the Deputy Mayor readily and graciously accepted. Her predecessors – Kevin Donahue, Dr. Roger Mitchell, and Christopher Geldart – all served on the Task Force in their capacity as Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice. We look forward to working closely with the Deputy Mayor and the expertise, passion, and dedication to the D.C. community she will bring to the Task Force’s work.

The Task Force, along with other organizations and coalitions, has already done the research and community engagement necessary to restore local control of parole, now the District must develop a plan and act. It is our hope that the Deputy Mayor, with the support and oversight of this Committee, will serve as a leader in establishing local control over this critical piece of D.C.’s criminal legal system. The Task Force remains committed to seeing this through, and looks forward to working collaboratively both with this Committee and the Deputy Mayor to ensure D.C. establishes local control of parole before October 31, 2023. Thank you for your time; I look forward to answering your questions.