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**Statement of the District Task Force on Jails & Justice
Before the Committee on Facilities & Family Services**

**Performance Oversight Hearing for the
Department of General Services**

February 28, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Lewis George, and members of the Committee on Facilities & Family Services. 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). As you may 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 testify about the Department of General Services' (DGS) involvement in planning and constructing of a new correctional annex in the District. DGS, with insight and feedback from the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC), is responsible for the drafting and publication of Requests for Proposals (RFP) regarding the construction of the new correctional annex.

First, I want to thank DGS for incorporating the Task Force's recommendations into the RFP for the Architectural Program Consultant and extend that thanks to DOC Director Faust for his support of the Task Force's recommendations. The RFP includes both the Task Force's Phase I and II reports as reference documents, an inclusion we are delighted to see in the solicitation. The RFP also requires that the Task Force's recommendations must be used when clarifying the best use of the Central Treatment Facility as it relates to programming. It further requires the selected contractor to meet with the Task Force at least twice, at the start of the process to discuss the design process, and again toward the end of the process. The purpose of the second meeting will be to discuss the contractor's progress, remaining steps until completion, and to answer any questions regarding collecting community feedback or analyzing survey results.

The Task Force also made recommendations for inclusion of community engagement in the RFP. We are pleased to report that the RFP includes Task Force recommendations for engaging with Department of Corrections' staff, individuals incarcerated at the Department of Corrections, and the D.C. community. Specifically, the RFP requires the contractor to conduct at least three community feedback sessions in conjunction with community partners that are open to the public – as recommended by the Task Force. It is my hope that extensive and effective engagement with the community, and taking advantage of previously published resources, including the Task Force's Phase I and Phase II reports, will set the contractor up for success.

While we are heartened to see the District take this first critical step in building a new correctional annex by releasing the RFP for the Architectural Program Consultant, we are concerned that this Fiscal Year 2023 funding was available October 1, but the RFP was not issued until January 13, 2023, well into the second quarter of the Fiscal Year. While the Task Force understands the competing needs and large workload of DGS, timely issuance of RFPs for

construction of a new correctional annex must be a priority. Delaying the steps necessary to plan, design, and construct the new correctional annex only perpetuates the harm caused to D.C.'s incarcerated residents caused by living in unsanitary, unsafe conditions. This harm is not distributed across District residents equally – roughly 90% of people incarcerated at the DOC are Black. By prioritizing the timely issuance of RFPs related to the design and construction of a new correctional annex, we will be prioritizing the creation of safer, more humane, and dignified living conditions for D.C.s incarcerated residents, the overwhelming majority of whom are Black. We anticipate two additional RFPs in this process, and look forward to more timely issuance.

The Task Force appreciates and applauds DGS for incorporating our feedback into the RFP and we will continue to advocate for the timely issuance of subsequent RFPs for the new correctional annex. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to ensure that the new correctional annex uses innovative, promising, and evidence-based practices to create a safer, healthier facility that supports personal growth. This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time; I look forward to answering your questions.