PUBLIC HEARING ON
HEIGHTENED FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND NATIONAL GUARD ACTIVITIES IN THE DISTRICT;
B26-0603, THE "BODY -WORN CAMERA TRANSPARENCY FOR USE OF FORCE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2026";
B26-0618, THE "FULL ACCOUNTABILITY IN ARREST REPORTING AMENDMENT ACT OF 2026";
AND
B26-0549, THE "SAFE COMMUNITY PLACES AND POLICING AMENDMENT ACT OF 2025"

Thursday, November 5, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

Good morning, Councilmember Pinto. I am testifying in my individual capacity as Ward 5 member of the State Board of Education, and I am not representing the views of the Board as a whole.

I fully support all efforts to end the military occupation of the District and to mitigate harm to our communities associated with federal law enforcement and National Guard activities, but I will focus my testimony on the topic of safe community places, specifically our schools.

Our teachers and administrators work tirelessly to create safe and welcoming learning environments for students. The increased presence of federal law enforcement and National Guard around our schools undermines these efforts.

With all due respect to the mostly young people who have chosen to serve the public by joining the National Guard, no respect is due to the mission they have been charged with by self-seeking leaders. There is simply no credible justification for their presence in DC, least of all around our schools.

In Ward 5, there have been some notable incidents involving federal law enforcement near schools. The ways that affected school communities have rallied in support of one another, especially those most vulnerable has been inspiring.

But what I most want to say today is that even where we haven't heard about specific harms, our school communities are deeply affected. The nature of this issue makes it difficult, maybe even inadvisable, to quantify the extent of these impacts, but we can be certain that the harms are real. For example, in just one school, more than 50 students have just disappeared from their school community during the heightened federal law enforcement and National Guard presence. This means that they very likely aren't learning at a critical time in their lives. For fear of or actual deportation, fear of intimidation or harm,

or for stepping into roles formerly filled by now deported adults, students are missing school. Their school communities are lesser for their absence, and our city is lesser for their absence.

Anything that you, that we, can do to end this occupation is better for our students, our school communities, and our city.

Thank you,
Robert Henderson