



## DC OFFICE ON WOMEN'S POLICY

Electronic Newsletter

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### Contact the Office on Women's Policy

*In person:*

Terese Lowery, Director  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 327  
Washington, DC 20004

*By phone:*

202.724.7690

*By email:*

women@dc.gov

*On the web:*

[www.women.dc.gov](http://www.women.dc.gov)

The Office on Women's Policy works to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between community stakeholders and the Executive Office of the Mayor that leads to social and political reforms, constructive programs and services and an exchange of information that empowers women and girls throughout the District of Columbia to reach



### House Fails to Pass Bill Attacking Rights of District Women

**Discriminatory bill would single out District women in ban of post 20 week abortions**

House bill H.R. 3803, the "District of Columbia Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act" recently failed to earn the support needed to pass through the US House of Representatives.

Sponsored by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), the bill sought to ban abortions after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy (the point at which proponents claim a fetus begins to feel pain), with no consideration for a women's health or her situation, even in cases of rape, incest or fetal anomaly.

Although proposed as national legislation, the bill would apply to only one jurisdiction in the nation: the District of Columbia – the sole jurisdiction without voting representation in Congress.



Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) was denied the right to testify on the bill before it was marked-up and approved at the Committee level, and then sent to the House floor for a vote.

The bill was brought to the floor on July 31, 2012 under suspension of the rules, which limits debate to only 20 minutes per side and bars amendments.

The bill earned only 220 of the 250 votes needed to pass through the House.

Congresswoman Norton praised her fellow democrats for voting down the bill in defense of the reproductive rights of District women, and the right to self-determination for all District residents.

*"Seldom does the District win a vote on the floor of the House this big. Republicans failed to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary on a bill that would have denied District of Columbia residents of their constitutional rights for the first time in American history,"* said Congresswoman Norton. *"During floor debate, Ranking Member John Conyers Jr. (D-MI) asked Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), the sponsor of the bill, why his bill was not introduced as a national bill... Franks never answered. Women understood the answer, however. The D.C. label fooled no one. And, in the end, I am grateful that an overwhelming majority of Democrats stuck with the District and refused to cross over to be a party to this abuse of congressional power."*

Mayor Vincent C. Gray issued a statement that the bill *"represents not only a gross violation of District women's right to autonomy over their own bodies, but also a gross violation of our entire city's autonomy over our own affairs."*

A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate (S. 2103) and proposed as an amendment to a larger, unrelated bill, but appears unlikely to gain significant traction.

# Mayor Gray Swears-In New Commission for Women

21 new Commissioners are charged with working to empower women and girls in the District of Columbia



On Thursday, July 26, 2012, Mayor Vincent C. Gray issued the official oath of office at a ceremony to welcome twenty-one new members of the District of Columbia Commission for Women.

*"Women play a tremendously important role in our society,"* said Mayor Gray as he challenged new members to develop substantive new initiatives to help women in the District achieve their full potential. *"Their success impacts the health of our children, the strength of families and the overall economy. The work of this Commission will go a long way to increase the chances of success for women throughout the District."*

Established in 1967 and authorized by law in 1978, the Commission for Women works together with the District's Office on Women's Policy to assess the status of women and girls and recommend strategies for improvement.

Newly-appointed Commissioners bring diverse experience and expertise, and represent each of the city's eight wards.

You can find a brief bio on each Commissioner at [www.women.dc.gov](http://www.women.dc.gov).

Commission members include: Nona Mitchell Richardson (Chair), Toayoa Aldridge, Ann Barnet, Marian Bennett, Ferial Bishop, Wilma Bonner, Lorraine Carter, Niki Charles, Nuchhi Currier, Crystal Espie, Janice Ferebee, Anee Garcia, Cynthia Harrison, Angela Knudson, Denese Lombardi, Ailena Mayo-Mills, Charlotte McConnell, Claudia McKoin, Shari Miles-Cohen, Amoretta Morris and Jill Morrison.

## A Formal Plan to Build 'One City'

Mayor Gray unveils Action Plan to achieve vision of 'One City'

### ONE CITY ACTION PLAN

*"One City" means that by choosing to live in this great city, we share the same civic destiny. We share a yearning to live in a prosperous, equitable, sustainable city. We choose to live here because we know that living in a vibrant, multicultural city makes us better as a city and better as a people. As we contemplate the future of the District of Columbia, we have before us a chance to remake and reinvent our city for the next generation. Let us take advantage of this moment in our city's history to seize our future, harness change for the better and build the elusive "One City" that we all dream of.*

— Mayor Vincent C. Gray



On July 25, 2012, Mayor Vincent C. Gray unveiled the [One City Action Plan](http://onecityactionplan.dc.gov), a comprehensive strategy that describes in specific steps how the Mayor's One City vision will be achieved. Organized by goals, strategies and actions, the plan provides District residents and business leaders alike with a concrete roadmap to understand and measure progress and hold city officials accountable in the areas that matter most to them.

The plan emphasizes the need to harness the tremendous change the District is experiencing to remake and reinvent our city for the next generation. It is organized into three overarching goals:

1. Grow and Diversify the District's Economy;
2. Educate and Prepare the Workforce for the New Economy; and
3. Improve the Quality of Life for All.

For each of these goals, the plan contains strategies and specific actions District officials are taking to achieve it, as well as key indicators by which to measure whether the goal has been achieved. Additionally, the plan provides an action checklist so that residents can track progress and hold city officials accountable.

Check out the Plan at [onecityactionplan.dc.gov](http://onecityactionplan.dc.gov).

# Office on Women's Policy Shares Best Practices with China

The Office hosts a presentation to representatives from the Beijing Haidian District



On June 11, 2012, the Office on Women's Policy hosted an international delegation from the Haidian District of Beijing, China for a hearty discussion on local strategies to enhance the status of women and girls. The delegation visited the District as part of a US tour focused on issues of women's economic and political empowerment and through the presentation, hoped to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Gain an overview of constitutional and other legal safeguards that grant and protect the rights of women in the U.S.;
2. Discuss women's access to and participation in the political decision-making process at federal, state, city, and community levels; and
3. Understand the scope of American women's involvement in business, law, political parties, unions, education, health care, self-help programs, and volunteerism.

The Office conducted a presentation on the status of women and girls in the District of Columbia as it relates to health and well being; education; employment; economic stability; and civic engagement, and discussed relevant policies and advocacy efforts of the District Government.

*"This meeting was a unique opportunity to reach across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss common issues among women and share best practices in working to address them," said Terese Lowery, Director of the Office on Women's Policy and Executive Director of the District's Commission for Women. "It also serves to further promote the Mayor's goal of increased collaboration with China."*

The presentation was organized by the District's Office of the Secretary, and was the third such presentation on women's issues by the Office on Women's Policy. Prior presentations have involved the Meridian International Center and delegations of women's rights advocates and government officials from other regions in China, Latin America and the Caribbean.

## DC Unemployment Declines to Lowest Level in 3 1/2 Years

Rate dips below 9% with dramatic improvements in District Wards most heavily impacted by unemployment



Mayor Vincent C. Gray recently welcomed news that the District's unemployment rate for July dropped two-tenths of a percentage point to 8.9 percent - the lowest it has been since February, 2009.

Preliminary federal estimates of July employment figures for the District show significant improvement over this time last year in parts of the city that have suffered from the highest rates of unemployment: wards 5, 7 and 8.

*"I am thrilled that our efforts to reduce unemployment in the District continue to pay off, and especially in areas that have been hit hardest by*

*the recent recession," said Mayor Gray in response to the news. "Having unemployment under nine percent citywide is a huge milestone, and I am proud of the work we've done to put DC residents back to work."*

The report from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the total number of jobs in the District grew by 13,100 in July, and that the number of unemployed District residents decreased by 600.

Mayor Gray's innovative **'One City, One Hire'** program played a role in the city's burgeoning workforce. The program, spearheaded by the District's Department of Employment Services, connects qualified, unemployed DC residents with jobs and provides employers who commit to hire unemployed District residents with placement, screening and training support. To date, 764 employers have joined this effort, and 3,750 District residents have been hired.

# Resources and Upcoming Events

Summer 2012

## DCPS Summit on Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Highlighting innovative efforts to assist young mothers in working toward self-sufficiency

**WHAT:** DC Department of Human Services (DHS), DC Public Schools (DCPS), and the Student Support Center will host a professional summit highlighting the New Heights Program, and their collaborative efforts to support expectant and parenting students in the completion of their high school education.

The New Heights Program is a school-based initiative that engages expectant and parenting students in 15 DC public high schools. The program seeks to improve the attendance and graduation rates of these students, prepare them for college or careers, and prevent subsequent pregnancies.

The summit will offer workshop sessions to share innovative strategies for collaboration and service, networking opportunities and personal success stories from program participants.

**WHO:** Summit participants will include elected officials, policy makers, professional service providers, constituents and stakeholders .

**WHEN:** Friday, August 3, 2012 from 9:00am — 1:30pm

**WHERE:** Eastern Senior High School  
1700 East Capitol Street, NE

**CONTACT:** For more information on the Summit, visit <http://newheightssummit.eventbrite.com/>



## Cancer Prevention Fundraiser and Empowerment Workshop

Event aims to assist women suffering from hair loss after cancer treatment

**WHAT:** Zuri Works presents a natural hair care workshop entitled, *"It'll Grow Back! Loving Your Hair with Natural Care"*. The workshop is intended to empower cancer treatment survivors suffering from hair loss, as well as women with natural hair, to maintain healthy locks and a positive self-image. The event features celebrity stylist and natural hair care expert, Felicia Leatherwood.

**WHO:** The workshop targets women with natural hair styles, and those suffering from hair loss as a result of cancer treatment.

**WHEN:** Sunday, August 12, 2012 from 2:00pm — 5:00pm

**WHERE:** Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery  
1632 U Street, NW

**CONTACT:** For more information, contact Sian Lewis at 202.630.3750 or [info@zuriworks.com](mailto:info@zuriworks.com) .



## Apprenticeship Opportunities

The International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) is sponsoring an apprenticeship program to provide skills training in the elevator constructor trade.

This is an excellent opportunity for District women to access non-traditional careers with long-term employment potential and a living wage.

Applications will be accepted September 6, 2012 from 7:00am - 12:00pm at IUEC Local #10 Union Hall - 9600 Martin Luther King Highway in Lanham, MD.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old.

## Women's Equality Day

**'Women's Equality Day' is August 26, 2012!**

On this day in 1920, Congress enacted the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, effectively ending the Women's Suffrage Movement which lasted more than 70 years, and finally granting women the right to vote.

Mayor Gray issued a proclamation to commemorate this day. The proclamation highlights the contributions of women that fought for equal voting rights, and the importance of civic engagement and equal representation among women in elected office.