

Dear DC Council,

We are asking the DC Council to reject the Migrant Services and Supports Emergency Act of 2022 as written, and to quickly revise and limit its scope consistent with the points below.

On Tuesday, you will be asked to vote on a bill that creates the Office of Migrant Services, which we applaud. Unfortunately, the bill goes much farther than that, including eroding the right to shelter for immigrant and non-immigrant residents of the District right on the eve of hypothermia season—risking the health and lives of unhoused DC residents. With no hearing and only a few days to discuss the bill, you will be asked to vote on a bill that could have significant unintended consequences this winter. Further, any bill that seeks to change the eligibility standards for our homeless continuum of care system should not be addressed in emergency legislation.

We fundamentally believe that DC should be providing *anyone* within our quasi-state borders the services and assistance they need to meet their basic needs, to travel on their way to their final destination, and to make DC their home if choose to stay here— regardless of what state or country a new resident has come from. Immigrants of all countries of origins, languages, and incomes should be welcomed and supported as new residents. We understand that this humanitarian crisis before us was created to make a political point in a progressive city—that immigrants are a drain on resources and are somehow taking away jobs or assistance from U.S. citizens. We reject this and ask that you not pass legislation that feeds into this narrative by excluding recent immigrants from DC resources and services.

We would support a bill that:

- Requires that specialized services and resources are provided to the migrant community;
- Ensures that services are culturally competent and accessible;
- Supplements gaps in other systems, such as ensuring migrants who do not intend to remain in DC, therefore would not be considered DC residents for purposes of other public benefits, are served by the Office of Migrant Services; and
- Requires basic due process, minimal health protections and other legal rights are granted to recipients of services.

We will *not* support a bill that:

- Endorses or creates a system that will be used to segregate migrants against their will;
- Will be used to justify denying migrants who want to stay in DC mainstream services if that is what they choose; or
- Will be used to further limit the right to shelter, define people out of homelessness who are in fact homeless, or increase bureaucratic barriers to shelter such as additional residency documents.

Sincerely,

1. ACLU of the District of Columbia
2. Advocates for Justice and Education
3. African Communities Together

4. Ayuda
5. Marta Beresin, Deputy Director, Health Justice Alliance, Georgetown University Law Center
6. Bread for the City
7. Children's Law Center
8. Coalition for the Homeless
9. Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED)
10. District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
11. DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
12. DC Fiscal Policy Institute
13. DC Statehood Green Party
14. DC Tenants' Rights Center
15. District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
16. Empower DC
17. Equal Rights Center
18. Fair Budget Coalition
19. Friendship Place
20. HIPS
21. Homeless Children's Playtime Project
22. Jews United for Justice
23. Jubilee Housing
24. Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
25. Many Languages One Voice (MLOV)
26. Miriam's Kitchen
27. Mother's Outreach Network
28. Platform of Hope
29. Sasha Bruce
30. Sex Worker Advocates Coalition (SWAC)
31. SPACES In Action
32. TENAC (DC Tenants' Advocacy Coalition)
33. Tzedek DC
34. Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
35. Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
36. Peter Wood, ANC Commissioner, SMD 1C03