

October 20, 2022

Dear DC Council,

We are asking the DC Council to make significant changes to the Migrant Services and Supports Act of 2022 to reflect our community's values.

We applaud the creation of the Office of Migrant Services and appreciate the work the Council has already done to reduce the harm in the bill. The bill is also infused with pernicious "othering" of people who move here from other countries, creating a segregated system of services that is both separate *and* unequal.

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 they 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 who choose to stay in DC should be welcomed and supported as new residents. We understand that this humanitarian crisis before us was created at least in part by people outside of DC hoping to argue that immigrants are a drain on resources and are somehow taking away jobs or assistance from U.S. citizens. We ask you to reject fear-based or manufactured scarcity talking points that feed into this narrative and result in exclusion of 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 and 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. Autistic People of Color Fund

5. Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network
6. Ayuda
7. Beloved Community Incubator
8. Marta Beresin, Deputy Director, Health Justice Alliance, Georgetown University Law Center
9. Bread for the City
10. Briya PCS
11. CARECEN (Central American Resource Center)
12. Children's Law Center
13. Coalition for the Homeless
14. DC Bar Pro Bono Center
15. DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
16. DC Fiscal Policy Institute
17. DC Public Restrooms
18. DC SAFE
19. DC Statehood Green Party
20. DC Tenants' Rights Center
21. Disability Rights DC
22. District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
23. Empower DC
24. Equal Rights Center
25. Fair Budget Coalition
26. First Shift Justice Project
27. Friendship Place
28. HIPS
29. Homeless Children's Playtime Project
30. Jews United for Justice
31. Justice and Witness Action Network DC team for the UCC Potomac Association
32. La Clinica del Pueblo
33. Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
34. Legal Counsel for the Elderly
35. Lincoln Congregational Temple UCC
36. Mary's Center
37. Many Languages One Voice (MLOV)
38. Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network
39. Miriam's Kitchen
40. Mother's Outreach Network
41. National Association of Social Workers Metro DC Chapter
42. National Coalition for the Homeless
43. Platform of Hope
44. Plymouth Congregational UCC Board of Social Action
45. Positive Force DC
46. Sasha Bruce
47. Sex Worker Advocates Coalition (SWAC)
48. SOME (So Others Might Eat)
49. SPACES In Action

50. Sunrise DC
51. TENAC (DC Tenants' Advocacy Coalition)
52. Tzedek DC
53. Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
54. Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
55. We Are Family Senior Outreach Network
56. Peter Wood, ANC Commissioner, SMD 1C03