



MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

JAN 16 2019

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OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

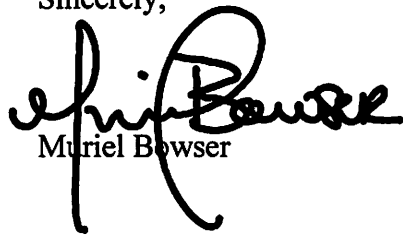
I am vetoing Bill 22-408, the "Fare Evasion Decriminalization Amendment Act of 2018." As you are aware, our Metro system continues to experience significant financial challenges. This past spring, I took a major step toward solving this problem by including dedicated taxes for Metro in my Fiscal Year 2019 budget and partnering with Virginia and Maryland to make sure each jurisdiction is paying its fair share. I applaud the Council's support for this landmark accomplishment and will continue looking for ways to support our residents, workers, and visitors who rely on Metro every day.

While we can certainly take pride in our accomplishment this past spring, there is more work to be done to stabilize Metro's budget and operations. WMATA estimates that Metro loses between \$25 million and \$50 million per year due to fare evasion, and I am concerned that Bill 22-408 would exacerbate the problem. While I understand that Council intended to change fare evasion to a civil offense, it is important to note that the bill simply removes criminal penalties while failing to set up a new civil adjudicative process. This leaves WMATA without any meaningful tools to enforce the payment of fares and will encourage fare evasion, which will result in additional lost revenue for the Metro system.

I want to be clear that I understand and share the Council's goal of mitigating the impacts of criminal justice involvement, especially on people of color. With this goal in mind, I introduced Bill 22-560, the "Second Chance Amendment Act of 2017," in November of 2017. This legislation would have radically reformed the District's criminal record sealing process and helped our citizens who still feel the impacts of past involvement in the justice system. I am disappointed that Council did not pass this legislation before the end of Council Period 22. I have reintroduced the legislation – which is a more appropriate and effective means of acknowledging and responding to such offenses – and look forward to working with Council to move it through the legislative process in Council Period 23.

While Bill 22-408 also has the aim of reducing the impacts of the criminal justice system, it would be to the detriment of the Metro system and its users. We should not encourage lawlessness on Metro, which could exacerbate public safety concerns on our Metro system and in our city. As Mayor, I have worked tirelessly to make the Metro accessible to more District residents for free through programs like Kids Ride Free, and targeted fare subsidy programs can do even more – but everyone should follow the system's rules. Consequently, this bill does not represent the best way to achieve our shared vision of criminal justice system reform. For this reason, I am vetoing Bill 22-408.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "M" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Muriel Bowser