

# DC COUNCIL MAJORITY CALLS ON MAYOR TO FUND MUSIC VENUE RELIEF

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WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- WASHINGTON, DC — Late afternoon on Thursday, October 29th, a [majority of the Council of Washington, DC co-signed a letter](#) calling upon Mayor Muriel Bowser to “identify and reallocate \$4.5 million to provide no-interest, forgivable loans to assist small music venues in the District that are in danger of closing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.” The letter, drafted by At-Large DC Councilmember and candidate Robert White, was co-signed by councilmembers David Grosso (At-Large) Elissa Silverman (At-Large) Brianne Nadeau (Ward 1), Charles Allen (Ward 6), Trayon White (Ward 8) and Brooke Pinto (Ward 2). The DMV Music Stakeholders Coalition applauds these councilmembers for taking this important step towards preserving the musical legacy and creative economy of this Music City.

This win for the DMV Music Stakeholders Coalition comes on the heels of [another important letter sent by Councilmember Nadeau](#) the executive director of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCA) last week. In the letter, the Councilmember asked the director to “reconfigure the priorities of (The Facilities and Buildings) Grant to meet immediate need,” noting that, “In our current environment, the District should place a lower priority on all but the most urgent capital improvements when so many spaces are struggling to stay open at all.” This letter followed the testimonies of DMV Music Stakeholders Coalition members to DCCA at their monthly meeting, asking the Commission to redirect a portion of the \$5 million allotment in their budget reserved for improvements to facilities to be used for mortgage and lease relief for our venues. Allocation of these funds could “jump start” two months of venue relief, giving the Mayor more time to secure the funding needed to support venues through the spring.

The response from Executive Director Sereke-Brhan was encouraging: “We are all sincerely appreciative that the Council passed emergency legislation to give the Commission the authority to use capital projects grant funds to provide rent or mortgage relief to grantees.” Dir. Sereke-Brhan added, “All of us at the Commission recognize the immense value and need for locally owned and operated arts venues. However, the current practice as informed by our enabling statutes is that such a decision must be voted on by the full board of commissioners, likely at the board’s regular monthly meeting on November 16.”

On Tuesday the DMV Music Stakeholders Coalition organized a day of action in support of the

Music Venue Relief Act. Musicians and advocates led an all-day musical protest across the street from the Wilson Building, and rallied musicians throughout the city to host virtual performances at 6pm, meant to educate the public and our elected officials about the #SaveDCVenues Campaign. "We are excited that the city is listening and that people care about their music scene and don't want to see more venues go extinct." said Chris Naoum, founder of Listen Local First DC and member of the Coalition.

On November 3rd, the coalition plans to have musical representatives at polling locations in each Ward in Washington DC to raise awareness of the Music Venue Relief Act and to urge constituents to also reach out directly to Mayor Bowser in support of the legislation's passage and funding.

#### About the DMV Music Stakeholder Coalition

The DMV Music Stakeholder Coalition is made up of musicians, collectives, venues, non-profits, presenters, and advocates from across the DMV who live and work within the DC music ecosystem. This Coalition came together in March as a way to share COVID resources and updates throughout the broader community, filling a gap left by city leadership.

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