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PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

2015-17 ACTIVITY REPORT

DEAR NEIGHBOR,



Four years ago, I proudly assumed office as one of your At-large Councilmembers for our hometown of Washington, D.C. My inspiration was driven by a longstanding desire to address some of the city’s most challenging issues and represent your best interests. My enthusiasm and determination has not waived, instead, it has heightened because of the progress made. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue serving you.

This report highlights some of our progress and the positive results we have achieved by working together. As Chair of the Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, I listened to your concerns and have addressed considerable challenges: housing affordability, services for senior citizens, economic growth and neighborhood development, public safety, and processes to assist the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions in executing their responsibility in the community. Furthermore, my advocacy to improve healthcare, workforce opportunities, and social services has uplifted some of our most vulnerable residents out of poverty while I supported sound fiscal expenditures and tax cuts beneficial to all residents.

While considerable progress has been made, new laws are in effect, issues have been resolved, innovative programs have been launched and services have improved for our constituents, the need for additional changes remain.

As the Council enters 2018 and beyond, I call upon your civic spirit and wisdom to join with me in reinvigorating our partnership of service to the people of D.C. to achieve more successful, lasting results for our city.

Sincerely,

Anita Bonds | At-Large Councilmember



TABLE OF CONTENTS



**AFFORDABLE HOUSING
PAGE 1**

- Tenant Protection & Home Owner Opportunities
- Public and Assisted Housing

**CONSTITUENT SERVICES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PAGE 5**

- Community Cornerstone Awards
- Public Engagement Activities

**ANCS, SAFETY, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC GROWTH
PAGE 7**

- Best Practices for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners
- Public Safety, Social Justice & Economic Growth

**FOCUS ON SENIOR CITIZENS
PAGE 10**

- Legislation Impacting the Lives of Senior Citizens



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

D.C. is home to diverse neighborhoods and people. It is fantastic, thriving, inviting and every day more people want to make it their home.

—COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

TENANT PROTECTION & HOME OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Today, D.C. is one of America's most vibrant and fiscally sound cities. Yet, District residents are facing a major housing crisis. According to a recent market overview published in July 2017, the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$2,675, while the median selling price of a house was \$550,000. Moreover, the demand for new luxury units, the infrequency of vacancies in affordable or rent control units, and restrictive building and land use laws present a unique set of legislative challenges requiring innovative housing solutions.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), is the primary agency that address affordable housing issues in the District. Through more than a dozen programs, DHCD is able to provide funding for

a series of non-profit development organizations and secure technical assistance for neighborhood businesses.

In the 2016 budget, Councilmember Bonds designated a separate report category for expenditures from the Small Business Technical Assistance (SBTA) program, creating greater accountability and transparency.

Most bonds, tax credits, and other financial instruments for development are provided through the D.C. Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA). Public housing developments, along with subsidy vouchers are provided through the D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA). Additional housing services for the homeless community are provided by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Councilmember Bonds fully supports the work of these agencies and has authored significant laws to complement these goals.

► The District's most valuable tools for addressing the housing affordability crisis is the **Housing Production**

Trust Fund (HPTF). Revenues from the fund are used to create and renovate residences and provide gap financing for thousands of work force housing properties across the city. Councilmember Bonds has been a strong advocate for dedicating a minimum of \$100 million to the HPTF each year, and has publicly called for \$120 million or more in the fund.

► Addressing the District’s affordable housing crisis requires input from all the stakeholders: tenants, housing providers, advocates, and developers. Therefore, Councilmember Bonds convened the **Affordable Housing Working Group** which is focused on reaching a consensus on sustainable legislation regarding affordable housing matters.

Once a final draft bill is developed, it is presented during a Council legislative session. Examples of bills developed from this process include: At-Risk Tenant Protection Clarifying Act of 2016, Rental Housing Late Fee Fairness Act of 2016, and Home Purchase Assistance Program Act of 2016.

Current topics under review include reverse mortgages, rent control petition reform, rent concessions, residential lease agreements, the District Opportunity to Purchase Act of 2008 (DOPA), and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) reform.

► In 2015, Councilmember Bonds joined with housing industry professionals and other government officials as members of Mayor Bowser’s Housing Preservation

Strike Force, to examine the housing crisis and create viable solutions. Their findings were published by DHCD in a 2017 report that recommended the creation of a new special housing fund that, once operational, would assist tenant organizations with pre-development costs and other fees critical to attaining ownership of their rental units. In the FY 2018 budget, the Council created a \$10 million **Housing Preservation Fund** to leverage private-sector investments to assist tenants.

► **Affordable Housing Programs Managed by the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development:** There are two primary types of affordable housing units in D.C.; however each is managed differently.

Through the District’s Inclusionary Zoning Program, residents are able to rent or purchase dwellings, or Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) Units, within new residential developments for at a below-market rate. To date, more than 2,000 units have been created. Eligibility for an IZ unit, requires prospective tenants to register with DHCD for placement on a waitlist and entry in a lottery competing with other applicants when a unit is made available.

Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) is a term applied to for-sale and for-rent housing units that are locally restricted to occupancy by households that earn no more than 60% of the Area Median Income. ADUs are created in exchange for government zoning relief, tax





Putting local resources into the District's federally owned public housing is fundamental to the growth and development of our city.

—COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

incentives, public financing, and/or the right to purchase or lease District-owned land. ADU compliance requirements are enforced by DHCD.

DIRECT SERVICES FOR TENANTS

The Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) is an independent D.C. agency that is often referred to as the “gateway” for tenant education, and is a key contributor to city-wide efforts to preserve more than 80,000 rent control units in the District. Councilmember Bonds directed FY2018 funds to OTA for the development of a user-friendly database of rent control units and significantly increased the capacity of the office to work with tenants. Its mandates include providing legal advice to tenants regarding disputes with housing providers, educating tenants on rental housing matters, advocating for renters through legislation, and providing emergency financial assistance to tenants in time of need. In the summer of 2017, OTA celebrated 10 years of service to District residents.

The Rental Housing Commission (RHC), recently completed its extensive rewrite of the District’s rental

housing regulations. The results will have a profound effect on the implementation of District rent control laws. Councilmember Bonds, along with tenants and housing providers, looks forward to the release of these much-anticipated regulations.

PUBLIC HOUSING AND ASSISTED HOUSING

In D.C., federally owned public housing is administered by the D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA), providing 8,300 homes to over 20,000 residents. DCHA also provides thousands of federally-subsidized Housing Choice Vouchers and locally funded vouchers through the Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP), which reduces the rent burden on low-income households. Currently, the federal funding allocated to DCHA only provides 86% of what is required to maintain, preserve, and enhance the District’s inventory of public housing.

► **The D.C. Housing Authority Rehabilitation and Maintenance Fund** (R&M Fund) represents an important win for District residents. In the FY 2017 budget, Councilmember Bonds successfully shepherded the transfer

of \$940,000 to DCHA and established the fund, which supports repairs and maintenance to public housing properties in DCHA's inventory. Councilmember Bonds also supported the inclusion of \$15 million in funding for public housing repairs in the R&M Fund in the FY 2018 budget. Additionally, Councilmember Bonds created and looks to expand the District First Housing Voucher Program, which is specifically targeted to the LGBTQ community, and formerly incarcerated seniors.

▶ One program that enables residents to become homeowners is DCHA's **Home Ownership Assistance Program**, or HOAP. Each month, public housing families that have "endured, powered, and persevered" graduate from the program to purchase their new homes and are recognized in a special celebration. Councilmember Bonds applauds this program and celebration, and looks forward to attending yet another ceremony in the coming months.

▶ Councilmember Bonds is fully committed to closely monitoring the implementation of the government's promise made to some of its most vulnerable constituents

through the **New Communities** program that involves the complete modernization of four aging public housing properties utilizing local revenue to transform the developments into mixed income communities. In 2016, Councilmember Bonds worked with residents, advocates, and Housing Authority officials to develop the "Sense of the Council in Support of a New Communities Initiative Relocation and Return Rights Strategy Resolution of 2016." This measure was approved unanimously by the Council and later approved as Resolution 1606 by the Housing Authority Board of Directors, and will allow residents displaced by development to return to their community. The New Communities Initiative will create exciting new living experiences for residents that have weathered poor conditions for some time.



▶ RECENT HOUSING LEGISLATION BY COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

At-Risk Tenant Protection Clarifying Temporary Amendment Act of 2016: Allows the Office of the Attorney General to enlist court action to protect tenants from "bad actor" housing providers that violate consumer protection laws. Councilmember Bonds also introduced a permanent version of this temporary law, which is currently under review.

Because many tenants are subject to inordinate fees and late charges, the **Rental Housing Late Fee Fairness Amendment Act of 2016** limits the amount of late fees a housing provider may charge a tenant for unpaid rent and defines the term "delinquent payment" to mean the amount of rent that is unpaid within 10 days of the due date.

Rent Control Hardship Petition Limitation Amendment Act of 2016: Limits any temporary rent increase that a housing provider may charge while awaiting a decision from the DHCD Rent Administrator on a hardship, substantial rehabilitation, or other petition agreements.

Remaining environmentally conscious, Councilmember Bonds introduced the **Hardship Green Grant and Rent Stabilization Act of 2014**, which sought to provide grants for housing providers wishing to install green roofs or use energy efficient

materials to renovate the rooftops of older residential buildings in the city. Councilmember Bonds is proud to have a 100% voting record in favor of a healthy, clean, and sustainable D.C.

Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) Amendment Act of 2016: Increased the maximum loan amount available to first-time home buyers from \$50,000 to \$80,000. During 2017, both DCHFA and the Urban League administered funds benefitting first-time D.C. homebuyers.

Also, Councilmember Bonds co-introduced the **Public Servant and First Responders Housing Incentive Emergency Amendment Act of 2017** to provide increased grants and matching funds to public servants who are first-time homebuyers.

Additionally, DCHFA's "D.C. Open Doors Program", which began in November 2016, has provided more than \$200 million in low-interest mortgage loans and closing cost assistance, allowing more than 800 individuals and families to purchase homes in the District. Councilmember Bonds welcomes every occasion to celebrate the good news of successful District home purchases.



CONSTITUENT SERVICES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

It is essential that public officials maintain direct contact with residents, businesses, employees and others who impact the quality of life in the community. As I make my way across the city talking with constituents from all walks of life, I'm rewarded to know that efforts towards improving the city are appreciated. —COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

During much of her adult life, as a proven leader both in the workplace and in the community, Councilmember Bonds has cherished face time with others. She understands the importance of listening to the community even as the means of communications are ever changing. As a Councilmember, she continues direct engagement and outreach activities with her constituents across the city.

In 2016, the Office of Councilmember Bonds fulfilled over 1,200 requests for assistance in the following areas: Human Services, Housing and Tenancy, Employment, and Senior Affairs. A few examples of constituent concerns addressed by the Councilmember's staff are:

► **There's No Place like a Safe Home:** Councilmember Bonds put the Safe At Home Act into action when she helped a 75-year-old Ward 7 senior seeking assistance for home improvements including a new stair lift and exterior hand railings that were installed at the resident's home. Councilmember Bonds co-introduced Safe At Home to assist low income seniors and persons with disabilities persons with making accessibility modifications to their homes. Since its inception in January

2016, this Office on Aging program has funded over \$12 million to complete nearly 350 projects.

► **April Showers Bring May Flowers:** In the spring of 2016, heavy winds and rain damaged the roof of Hellen Williams' home in Ward 4. With a helping hand from the Office of Councilmember Bonds, Ms. Williams successfully navigated the Department of Housing and Community Development's Single Family Rehabilitation Program (DHCD-SFRP), and received the assistance that she needed to complete the repairs on her home. Kudos to the SFRP - yet another D.C. resident served!

► **Putting Residents to Work:** Arvie Milner, a proud D.C. resident, was a member of the Department of Employment Services (DOES) Project Hope Program's ninth cohort. While the Councilmember advocated on his behalf, it was Arvie who proved to be the success. When asked why he chose to partake in the program, he said, "My surroundings inspire me to push harder and show others that your environment doesn't dictate who you'll become. This generation needs more positive examples and I plan to be a great one." Through Project

★ COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE AWARDS ★

The Cornerstone Project gives everyone an opportunity to be recognized for services performed in the community. Simply put, if your actions benefits neighbors, there is a strong likelihood that they will recognize your good deeds with a nomination for the Community Cornerstone Award.

— COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

Councilmember Bonds is no stranger to collaboration and understands the importance of recognizing community deeds. In 2015, she launched the Community Cornerstone Initiative to spotlight the everyday efforts of ordinary citizens who work to make the city better for all. Each year, dozens of deserving constituents and their guests gather for the annual ceremony and reception honoring these community leaders at city hall.

Hope, he received real-world job training, an IT certificate, and secured full time employment with SecurTek. Mr. Milner is now working for the D.C. Department of Health.

► **A Different Type of Public Service:** When word spread that a local janitor who worked in a federal building, a senior citizen with a health problem, made a home in the subway stations, Councilmember Bonds did not remain silent. Once again, through her advocacy and with the help of the Local Rent Supplement Program, a contributing D.C. resident found permanent affordable housing.

► **Always Time for DC Youth:** As a proud daughter of a veteran, Councilmember Bonds was honored along with her staff to join the JROTC Troop from Roosevelt High School on D.C. Flag Day to express sincere gratitude to the men and women who have served our nation, many who have fought in every major U.S. conflict or war and have been awarded 48 Medals of Honor, yet returned home to DC and campaigned for D.C. Statehood in hopes of realizing rights of citizenship for D.C. residents, including voting rights in Congress for D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton.

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Community Activities are important opportunities to hear directly from residents about how government enriches their lives. Since 2013, Councilmember Bonds has crisscrossed District neighborhoods to participate in a variety of engagements with residents and organizations, as well as various government sponsored events. Whether talking to senior citizens in Chevy Chase, discussing zoning matters with land use experts in Takoma and Kalorama, supporting Congress Heights moms at their "Tea Against Violence", uplifting the 100 Fathers Program, addressing community activists in Park View, or visiting with civic leaders in Northeast Boundary and Fairlawn, Councilmember Bonds appreciates her time with constituents and their efforts towards growing the city.

✓ Periodic speaker before the D.C. Tenants' Advocacy Coalition and at the Economic Economy Conference, Annual Tenant and Tenant Association Summit, D.C. Commission on Aging Conferences, District Real Estate Association, Association of Building Owners, and Coalition for Non-profit Housing and Economic Development, among others.

- ✓ Worships with religious congregations at their houses of prayer, regularly extends congratulatory messages and condolences, and recognizes their holidays with greetings.
- ✓ Participates in the Annual Fourth of July and Pride Parades, the Chinese New Year Celebration, and other neighborhood festivals and holiday events.
- ✓ Hosts an annual theater luncheon celebration at the Shakespeare Theatre and the annual Art & Politics show.
- ✓ Recipient of the 2016 Housing Supporter of the Year Award presented by MANNA, Inc., the 2016 LINKS Outstanding Elected Official Award, the 2016 Legislator of the Year Award from the Retired Federal Employee Association, and the 2017 Legislator of the Year Award from the National Federation of Democratic Women.

Councilmember Bonds, and other members of the Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee, working alongside Mayor Bowser, celebrate the recently awarded coveted Robert C. Larson Housing Policy Leadership Award for innovative strategies in affordable housing - and extend congratulations to the DC housing agencies and advocates for this competitive win over Denver, CO, Boston, MA, and New York City.

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REGULARLY SCHEDULED COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Councilmember Bonds routinely attends community events.

If you would like her to participate in your organization's activity, please contact her office at 202-724-8064.

 **Community Coffee & Conversation**
Residents meet with the Councilmember and enjoy a cup of joe at a neighborhood coffee shop or restaurant.

 **Community Happy Hour**
Another opportunity to join the Councilmember for discussion during convenient "after-work hours" from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at a neighborhood bar, lounge, or restaurant.

 **Ice Cream Social**
An afternoon event conducted with senior citizens at their housing development.

 **Occasional Greetings**
Written salutations for birthdays, retirements, and home-going celebrations are provided upon request.



ANCS, SAFETY, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

“Serving the residents of D.C. is a tremendous responsibility that I energetically embrace working to make life meaningful, safe, enjoyable and thriving for all; using opportunities and processes to reduce poverty, increase quality affordable housing, improve the environment and raise consensus across neighborhoods with the leaders, advocates, funders, providers, families, and individuals for cooperation, collaboration and productive engagement benefitting the city as a whole.

—COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

Training Seminars, Networking, Resolving Systemic Issues, and Informational Sessions:

The Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) training seminar, held in April 2017, included basic interpersonal skill-building workshops for the newly elected commissioners and a series of discussions on the topics of land use, housing, inspections, neighborhood

development, and public safety. The seminar is centered on developing strong working relations between the ANCs’ Single Member District members, government agency officials, and community organizations to assist the commissioners with improved service delivery to their constituents. In 2016, after hundreds of discussions with commissioners, Councilmember Bonds authored the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Omnibus Amendment Act of 2016, which updated the ANC laws



originating in 1973. Among other revisions, the law clarified requirements as to when government agencies are to give “great weight” to input from the ANCs.

Public Safety Outreach Forum: Since 2014, the Councilmember has held annual public safety roundtables attended by commissioners and other government officials to encourage the exchange of information. Outcomes from these sessions provide the commissioners with critical feedback on measures for fighting violent crime and strategies for building trust and increasing community engagement. During the 2015 meeting, the commissioners drafted a Community Action Plan, which emphasized the elimination of illegal guns and drugs, as well as the need for the government to assist with job training, apprenticeship programs, and permanent job placement - particularly in neighborhoods with strained relations between police and the community. The participants discussed new ideas, including the installation of property cameras at neighborhood locations as a deterrent to crime. Councilmember Bonds and her staff are continuously involved in outreach activities with the ANCs, and routinely attend monthly commission meetings, organize informational forums, and maintain oversight of the Office of ANCs.

EDUCATION

As a member of the Committee on Education and a proud former D.C. public school student, Councilmember Bonds is deeply committed to the success of the District’s public education system. She has been a voice for students and their families, as well as for educators, school leaders, and other stakeholders citywide. She advocates for robust communications between our schools and community, and is focused on improving the academic outcomes for all students, as well as socialization efforts that build trust, engage, and motivate students to learn. Recent testing results showing improvements in reading and math performance among students at every grade level are gratifying. Through great efforts, D.C. schools are stepping forward to become the very best.

Councilmember Bonds supports the work of the Committee on Education to bring rationality to school modernization in the District, while de-politicizing the order and timeline of school construction projects. Every student should have access to key educational facilities and equipment, athletics, and college and career preparation, including science labs, computers, musical instruments, and language studies. The Councilmember welcomed new DCPS Chancellor Antwan Wilson to

the District government a few months ago, and is closely observing the progress of our public schools with expectations of continuous improvements in college and career readiness, student attendance, retention and stabilization of school leadership, and closing the achievement gap for at-risk students.



Legislation to Forward Educational Goals:

- ✓ **UDC Dream Amendment Act of 2015:** With Councilmember Bonds' co-sponsorship, this bill was passed to direct the University of the District of Columbia system to allow undocumented students to receive in-state tuition and local financial aid and scholarships.
- ✓ **The Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey Act of 2015:** This bill, co-introduced by Councilmember Bonds, requires all teachers and principals within the D.C. public school system to undergo suicide prevention, intervention, biannual training, and requires annual reporting on school safety, engagement, and learning environment.

► PUBLIC SAFETY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Councilmember Bonds has championed social justice and economic policies.

Death Certificate Gender Identity Recognition Amendment Act of 2015:

Clarifies the process for designating a decedent's gender identification or expression on their death certificate.

Political Action Committee Contribution Regulation Amendment Act of 2015:

Eliminates the ability of political action committees to receive contributions of unlimited amounts during non-election years.

Building Service Employee Minimum Work Week Act of 2016:

Protects the interests of building service workers by requiring a minimum work week, ensuring that a livable wage is earned.

Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016:

Changes District laws regarding the detainment of minors and requires annual reporting of juvenile confinement.

Foster Parents Statements of Rights and Responsibilities Amendment Act of 2016:

Requires the District government to provide foster parents with training on their rights and responsibilities for foster parents while caring for foster children.

Feminine Hygiene and Diapers Sales Tax Exemption Amendment Act of 2016:

Ensures that these types of products are equally accessible to all residents regardless of their financial means.

Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016:

Precludes a housing provider from inquiring about certain criminal convictions against an applicant prior to making a conditional offer of housing.

Vacant Property Enforcement Amendment Act of 2016:

Requires that an owner of vacant or blighted property provide affirmative proof that the property is no longer vacant or blighted before that designation is removed and will

increase penalties for those owners who do not address violations.

Carcinogenic Flame Retardant Prohibition Amendment Act of 2016:

Prohibits the manufacture and distribution of products containing cancer-causing flame retardants.

During the FY 2018 budget process, Councilmember Bonds advocated strongly for additional Housing Inspectors to be placed in the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to help the District government ensure that all D.C. residents can enjoy safe, sanitary living conditions.

Councilmember Bonds authored an amendment to the FY 2015 Budget Support Act to establish the Good Hope Road, SE Retail Priority Area. This allowed small businesses in the designated area to participate in grant initiatives like Great Streets, administered by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.



FOCUS ON SENIOR CITIZENS

Throughout D.C., I proudly advocate for more than 100,000 elderly residents, and for services and programs on their behalf. I am very grateful for their resilience and many achievements over the years and remain committed to continue working for quality living for all. To our newer aging residents, a robust welcome and know that you have joined one of America's best communities.

—COUNCILMEMBER BONDS

The District's senior community is among the most vibrant, educated, and accomplished in the nation. However, D.C. seniors are also among some of the poorest in the nation and many are tenants. According to the D.C. Office on Aging, 30% of senior households reported income under \$15,000, and 19% reported over \$60,000. Fewer are aging in their own homes with rising property taxes and the increasing costs for other services.

► **Outreach with D.C. Seniors** is a continuous priority for Councilmember Bonds and her staff. Whether attending a senior focused event or holiday celebration, visiting the Wellness Centers, senior housing, nursing homes, dropping by a private residence to say hello, or touring a facility to advocate for service improvements, Councilmember Bonds is focused on addressing concerns of DC's aging community.

► **Senior Villages:** Eleven Senior Villages, located in neighborhoods across D.C., focus on preventing the isolation of seniors and allowing them to live safely and to be actively connected to their neighbors and are primarily run by volunteers who assist elderly residents with daily tasks such as changing a light bulb, performing household chores, or providing a ride to a doctor's appointment. Programs at each Village vary. In both the FY 2017 and 2018

budgets, Councilmember Bonds successfully directed \$250,000 in funding to support the villages, assuring opportunities for low income seniors who might otherwise be deterred by membership fees to join the organizations.

► LEGISLATION IMPACTING THE LIVES OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Elderly Tenant and Tenant with a Disability Protection Amendment Act of 2015: Protects low-income tenants from sharp rent increases by limiting the annual increase they must pay and exempting them from increases resulting from housing providers obtaining other rent increases. The regulatory portion of the law became effective 4/7/17.

Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults Amendment Act: Penalizes criminals that take the property of citizens aged 65 and older. It also provides the D.C. Attorney General with authority to subpoena and seek injunctive relief when prosecuting those crimes. This law became effective 11/23/16.

Safe at Home Act: Co-introduced by Councilmember Bonds to provide elderly and persons with disabilities with home-based devices, such as railings, doors, and chairlifts, to improve home accessibility and enhance independent living. As of July 2017, Safe at Home has provided over \$12 million for home modifications and resulted in the completion of nearly 350 home projects.