

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of At-Large Councilmember Kwame R. Brown

Chairperson, Committee on Economic Development

PRESS RELEASE

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Big Issues Need Big Solutions

Brown takes first day of Council session head on

Washington, (D.C.) –Today, the Council of the District of Columbia returned to session and Councilmember Kwame R. Brown, Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, put feedback from his summer activities into action. He authored and co-introduced legislation that will stimulate economic growth through local small business tax relief and vocational training if signed into law. The two major pieces of legislation are the **Neighborhood Commercial Corridor Tax Relief Strategy Act of 2007** and the **Vocational Education Feasibility Act of 2007**.

The Neighborhood Commercial Corridor Tax Relief Strategy Act of 2007

Brown gets backing of 11 colleagues including co-introducers Councilmembers Thomas, Schwartz and Evans and cosponsors Chairman Gray, Councilmembers Alexander, Bowser, Catania, Cheh, Graham, Mendelson, and Wells.

The purpose of the tax relief act is to require the Mayor to create a tax relief strategy for all D.C. neighborhood businesses within a commercial corridor that are economically impacted by the road infrastructure construction performed by the District Department of Transportation. Brown gets support of 11 of his colleagues.

Councilmember Brown has nearly completed his tour of all of the Main Streets in the District. Over the summer, he toured eight of nine Main Streets to ensure the programs were running effectively and efficiently. During the tour, business owners expressed concern to Brown that ongoing city construction projects meant to enhance streetscapes were adversely affecting their businesses.

As an example, members of the Historic Dupont Main Street spoke with Brown about the construction on P Street, NW. To take action on his conversation with the owners, Councilmember Brown pushed to secure a \$56,000 grant to fund a valet service while construction is underway. The funding will be available during the month of October and will help owners tackle customer parking issues.

Brown desires to take proactive measures to deal with projects either in progress or scheduled for the future. “My goal is to make sure that local businesses thrive,” said Councilmember Brown. “City infrastructure projects intended to revitalize neighborhoods should be economic stimulants, not inhibitors of growth. I want to provide solutions to potential problems before they occur. I want our local businesses to survive.”

The Vocational Education Feasibility Act of 2007

Brown gets backing of 8 colleagues including co-introducers Councilmembers Schwartz and Thomas and cosponsors Chairman Gray, Councilmembers Alexander, Barry, Catania, Cheh, and Wells.

The **Vocational Education Feasibility Act** requires the Mayor to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a facility for adult vocational education to be completed by 2009. The bill would require the study to include the following analyses:

- An assessment of vacant buildings and facilities appropriate for vocational training in the District;
- Statistical data on the rate at which adults have entered into vocational careers as compared to professional careers in the last 10 years, regionally and nationally; and
- An analysis of the employability and earning potential of certified vocationally trained adults in the workforce in the District.

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“In order to benefit from billions of dollars in economic development over the coming years, like the Nationals’ Stadium project, District residents need to be trained in skilled crafts such as engineering, plumbing, construction and other important trades,” said Councilmember Brown.

Councilmember Brown championed the effort to enhance vocational education for District residents. He authored the amendment to the **School Modernization Funds Resolution of 2007** to provide **\$30 million** in funds to build Phelps Vocational Engineering Academy. Now he wants to take expand career development programs for adults.

“I’m determined to provide District residents with the adequate resources needed to succeed in their careers and provide a better quality of life for their families,” said Councilmember Brown. “Adults, in particular, need access to opportunities to gain the skills that a vocational facility would provide. With the right tools, District residents can benefit from and help maintain our economic growth.” The feasibility study would be due to the Council within 90 days of the effective date of the Act.

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