

Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
MEMORANDUM

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

TO: Chairman Phil Mendelson
FROM: Councilmember Charles Allen *CA*
RE: Request to Agendize Measures for the July 28, 2020 Additional Legislative Meeting
DATE: July 23, 2020

I am requesting that you agendize the following measures for the July 28, 2020 Additional Legislative Meeting:

Emergency Legislation at the Request of the Executive

- “Open Polling Places Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2020”
- “Open Polling Places Emergency Amendment Act of 2020”
- “Open Polling Places Temporary Amendment Act of 2020”

There exists a need to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to require the Board of Elections (“Board”) to operate no fewer than 80 polling places for the November 3, 2020, General Election. On June 2, 2020, the Board conducted the District’s primary election. Prior to that date, the Board had encouraged the use of early voting and mail-in ballots. However, many residents chose to vote in person either by preference or because of concerns with the mail-in ballot process, such as tracking of their requests, failing to receive their ballot by mail, or failing to receive confirmation of their mail-in ballot being received by the Board. As a result of these challenges, as well as the limited number of polling places, District voters waited hours in unacceptably long lines, with many still waiting to vote past midnight. To ensure maximum voter turnout and that all District voters are able to safely exercise their fundamental right to vote, it is necessary that the Board operate no fewer than 80 polling places for the November 3, 2020, General Election.

Drafts of these measures are attached. The Committee will also be moving an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to the measures on Monday with additional election-related provisions necessary to prepare for the General Election. Please contact Sonia Weil, Senior Legislative Counsel, at sweil@dccouncil.us with any questions.

cc: Members, Council of the District of Columbia
Office of the Secretary
Office of the General Counsel
Office of the Budget Director
Mayor’s Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs