

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
**COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**  
BRIANNE K. NADEAU, CHAIR

**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** Chairman Phil Mendelson  
**FROM:** Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau  
Chair, Committee on Human Services  
**DATE:** November 24, 2020  
**RE:** Request to Agendize for December 1, 2020

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*Brianne K. Nadeau*

I request that the following measures be added to the agenda for the December 1, 2020 Additional Meeting of the Committee of the Whole, should one be scheduled, and Regular Legislative Meeting pursuant to Council Rule 426.

Measures from the Committee

▪ **B23-0487, the “Service Animal in Training Clarification Amendment Act of 2020”**

The purpose of Bill 23-0487, the “Service Animal in Training Clarification Amendment Act of 2020”, is to enable individuals with physical and mental disabilities to participate fully in the social and economic life of the District by clarifying that the owner of a service animal in training may serve as the accompanied trainer of that animal.

The legislation amends the section of the District of Columbia Official Code that outlines the rights of blind and physically disabled persons by clarifying the definition of the term “service animal in training” to include an animal that is “accompanied by an experienced service animal or the animal’s owner”. It also clarifies that that an owner of a service animal in training has the same access and liability conferred upon them as is conferred upon a person with physical or mental disabilities under D.C. Official Code § 7-1002(b).

This legislation was referred to the Committee on Human Services and marked up by the Committee on November 18, 2020. The CFO concluded that funds are sufficient in the financial plan to implement the bill.

**B23-0437, “Office of the Ombudsperson for Children Establishment Amendment Act of 2020”**

B23-0437 would establish the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children as an independent, impartial office, responsible to the Council and tasked with improving outcomes for CFSA children by holding agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under the law.

The newly formed Office will replace the current CFSA Ombudsman’s function of receiving and seeking to efficiently and effectively resolve CFSA constituent complaints, while enhancing the independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and credibility of the Office by moving it outside the executive and instituting additional best practices recommended by the United States Ombudsman Association (“USOA”). Critical to protecting the Office’s independence is the fact that the Ombudsperson for Children will be appointed for a 5-year term

by the Chairman with approval by a majority of Council, and may only be removed for cause by a majority vote of Council.

Furthermore, the legislation identifies the Office's role as an oversight body of CFSA and other agencies that affect the lives of CFSA children. In other words, the focus of the office is on CFSA children, not just the administrative acts of CFSA. In performing oversight, the Office will pay special attention to issues facing crossover youth as well as broader systemic issues that implicate multiple agencies at once. This duty is of particular importance because there is no other entity in District government dedicated to it.

As part of its oversight and complaint resolution functions, the Office will have authority to access to records and information, much like the current CFSA Ombudsman, DC Auditor, and *LaShawn* court monitor have, and be responsible for publishing a report to the Council and public at least once annually.

Finally, the legislation organizes the Office in such a way that its mission and duties can grow organically through the creation of additional subordinate agency-focused ombuds, like a Deputy DYRS Ombudsperson, as well as the incorporation of existing ombuds offices like the Office of Ombudsman for Public Education.

This legislation was referred to the Committee on Human Services and marked up by the Committee on November 24, 2020. The CFO concluded that B23-0437 will cost \$577,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 and \$3,005,000 over the four-year financial plan.

The reports and prints of all three measures were timely filed. If you have any questions regarding these measures, please contact Benjamin Davis at 202-741-2111.

cc: Members, Council of the District of Columbia  
Office of the Secretary  
Office of the General Counsel