

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

REVISED/RECONVENED

**CHAIRMAN PHIL MENDELSON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE**

on

PR 25-507, “District of Columbia Sentencing Commission Joel Caston Appointment Resolution of 2023”

PR 25-542, “Ombudsperson for Children Petrina Jones-Jesz Appointment Resolution of 2023”

PR 25-543, “District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission Marie Johns Reappointment Resolution of 2023”

on

Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

**Hearing Room 412 (Track B)
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
DC Council Website (www.dccouncil.gov)**

Consideration of the appointments in this roundtable notice will take place over two days. The December 20, 2023 hearing will hear testimony regarding PR 25-507, the “District of Columbia Sentencing Commission Joel Caston Appointment Resolution of 2023” and PR 25-542, the “Ombudsperson for Children Petrina Jones-Jesz Appointment Resolution of 2023” from the public and from appointees Petrina Jones-Jesz and Joel Caston, respectively. Testimony from the public and the appointee, Marie Johns, on PR 25-543, the “District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission Marie Johns Reappointment Resolution of 2023” will take place on December 21, 2023. The Wednesday roundtable will recess after taking testimony and then reconvene at **2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 21, 2023. To be clear: this roundtable will convene initially on December 20, 2023.**

This notice has been revised to add PR 25-507. The stated purpose of PR 25-507 is to appoint Mr. Joel Caston to the District of Columbia Sentencing Commission. Chairman Mendelson introduced his appointment resolution on October 27, 2023. The Council established the District of Columbia Sentencing Commission to review and analyze pertinent sentencing data, policies, and practices in the District of Columbia, submit an annual report to the Council summarizing the Commission's activities and including further recommendations as appropriate, and to review and research sentencing policies and practices locally and nationally and make recommendations to the Council that increase the fairness and effectiveness of criminal sentencing policies and practices in the District of Columbia.

The stated purpose of PR 25-542 is to appoint Ms. Petrina Jones-Jesz as the Ombudsperson for Children. Chairman Mendelson introduced her appointment resolution on November 30, 2023. The Council established the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) as an independent, impartial office tasked with improving outcomes for children involved with, previously involved with or

otherwise known to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), by holding agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under the law, and working collaboratively across systems that impact CFSA children to foster improved outcomes, and strengthen service delivery.

The stated purpose of PR 25-543 is to reappoint Ms. Marie Johns to the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission. Chairman Mendelson introduced her reappointment resolution on November 30, 2023. The District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission (JNC) was established by the District of Columbia Self-Government and Government Reorganization Act of 1973 (known as the “Home Rule Act”). The JNC screens, selects and recommends to the President of the United States candidates for appointment to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The JNC also appoints the chief judges for both courts.

The purpose of the roundtable is to receive testimony from public witnesses as to the fitness of these appointees. Those who wish to testify must register using the Council’s Hearing Management System at <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/hearings> by **5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 18, 2023. Testimony is limited to four minutes.** Witnesses who anticipate needing spoken language interpretation, or require sign language interpretation, are requested to inform the Committee office of the need as soon as possible but no later than five business days before the proceeding by emailing cow@dccouncil.gov. We will make every effort to fulfill timely requests, although alternatives may be offered. Requests received in less than five business days may not be fulfilled. Witnesses will receive instructions on how to participate by Zoom prior to the hearing. If you have additional questions, please contact Christian Washington, Special Counsel, at (202) 724-8083 or cow@dccouncil.gov.

Public witnesses will participate virtually via the Internet on the Zoom Video Conference platform. Testimony should be submitted through the Council’s Hearing Management System in advance of the hearing. Testimony will be publicly accessible upon Committee review. If you are unable to testify at the hearing, written statements are encouraged and will be made a part of the official record. Statements for the record should be submitted through the Hearing Management System or left by voicemail by calling (202) 430-6948 (up to 3 minutes which will be transcribed). The record will close at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, January 3, 2024.