



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

October 23, 2024

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I cannot support this emergency legislation and am vetoing it.

The Council's emergency bill seeks to create a new standard for contractor jobs that are eliminated as a result of Council-enacted budget reductions – a standard that does not exist for the District Government's own workforce and that would be financially unfeasible if applied to all other contractors.

Although we all recognize the challenges of ending the DC Circulator at the end of this year, and the pain of eliminating contractor positions, it was not done haphazardly. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) worked with RATP Dev – the contractors' employer – and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to help employees find other employment opportunities in the city and region. Several job fairs were held that included employers like Fairfax Connector, Omni Ride, Montgomery County Ride On, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Student Transportation Services. WMATA has publicly stated it will be hiring a number of bus drivers and mechanics for Metrobus. Given the Washington region's high demand for CDL-licensed drivers and experienced mechanics, we believe the RATP Dev employees are well-positioned to find new, well-paying jobs – without the need for a costly new unemployment benefits program that is dedicated only to these individuals.

Finally, the Council's fiscal impact statement does not properly account for the cost of redirecting revenue from the Surplus Property Sales Fund, nor does it fully account for the costs of DDOT administering a new unemployment benefits program for individuals it doesn't even employ – the majority of whom are not District residents.

For these reasons, I am vetoing this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser