

Testimony of the Commission on Aging
Committee on Executive Administration and Labor
February 19, 2026

Good morning, I am Frances Johnson, a member of the Commission on Aging, and I am pleased to be here today to speak on the Commission's behalf. We would like to begin by thanking Mr. Guleford Bobo for his many years of service to the Commission. Mr. Bobo has served multiple terms on the Commission and over the last several years served as its Chairman. The Commission is stronger and more active today because of his leadership. We would also like to recognize the contributions of Commissioner Carolyn Matthews, who passed in December. Commissioner Matthews served several terms and was a steadfast leader for older adults in our community.

Chairwoman Bonds, during your 13 years on the Council, you have been a devoted advocate for older adults. Your leadership mattered.

- Because of you, meal sites for seniors expanded and dedicated funding for nutrition programs put in place.
- Because of you, a Dementia Navigator is available to aid seniors and their families who are coping with memory issues.
- Because of you, the Safe at Home program was approved allowing seniors to safely remain in the homes they love.
- Because of you, the shallow rent subsidy was funded to aid low income seniors.
- Because of you, we can look forward to new wellness centers in wards 8 and 2 and hopefully, before you leave office, in ward 3.
- Because of you, funding was made available to the DC villages to help this innovative concept expand across the District.
- Because of you, increased funding for transportation programs has allowed seniors to remain independent and connected.

- Because of you, we have a Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) to advocate for the needs of our older adults.

Because of you, the District of Columbia is better prepared to meet the future. Thank you for all you have done.

The “future” challenge of an aging population is already with us. The population of older adults is increasing as the baby boom generation ages. A decade ago, about 105,000 older adults (60 and over) called DC home. By 2035, this population of older adults is expected to reach 133,000 (Office of Planning, 2024). And the oldest “boomers” are already entering their 80’s, when fragility and health challenges become more pronounced. The Council needs to incorporate this substantial increase into its planning for the future.

The Commission’s work this past year has focused on elevating the concerns of seniors to officials who can address them and facilitating the flow of information to seniors.

- For example, as implementation of the Better Bus network approached, commissioners encouraged active engagement by DACL officials in elevating problems affecting seniors and facilitated meetings between seniors and Department of Transportation and WMATA officials.
- Commission members also provided DACL leadership with feedback on wellness, nutrition, transportation, and case management activities.
- Commission members facilitated meetings between seniors and the Office of Peoples Council, the Office of Tenant Advocate, Adult Protective Services, and the Department of Human Services and arranged for a demonstration of nutritious cooking by a DC chef.
- Mini-commission meetings were held in wards 4, 7, and 8 and an organizing meeting for a mini-commission was held in ward 5.

- A commissioner participated in the DACL-sponsored feasibility study on senior wellness centers in Wards 2 and 3. Commission members also regularly served on advisory groups for Wellness Centers.

During fiscal year 2026, the Commission expects to continue these activities. It also plans to examine:

- Funding for transportation programs, especially connector cards;
- Cooperation between the Departments of Health and Buildings in addressing problems such as bed bug and rodent infestations;
- Construction of Senior Wellness Centers in wards 8, 3, and 2;
- Feasibility and need for a “one- stop application shop” to simplify processes and facilitate access to programs; and
- Providing seniors with education about healthcare decision-making, including how to appoint a power of attorney when they cannot make their own decision.

This concludes our statement. I am happy to answer any questions.