

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Mayor's Office of Legal Counsel



**Fiscal Year 2026 Performance Oversight
Hearing**

Testimony of Eugene A. Adams, Director

Before the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson
February 4, 2026

GOOD MORNING, MADAME CHAIR, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF-- I'M HERE ON BEHALF OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL TO AGAIN DISCUSS THE STATUS OF THE OFFICE, OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES OVER THE LAST YEAR TO DATE AND, OF COURSE, TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS YOU OR THE COMMITTEE MAY HAVE.

BEFORE I BEGIN MY FORMAL COMMENTS, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO THANK YOU—PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY—FOR YOUR EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE TO CITY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, AND, OF COURSE, OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

YOUR LEADERSHIP, VISION AND SUPPORT HAS CONTRIBUTED MIGHTILY TO OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS. IT HAS BEEN MY HONOR TO KNOW YOU AND WORK WITH YOU!

TURNING NOW TO THE MOLC'S PERFORMANCE, YOU MAY RECALL THAT IN LAST YEAR'S TESTIMONY, I SPOKE ABOUT OUR PLAN TO FOCUS MORE ON INTERNAL OPERATIONS THAN IN YEARS PAST. I MENTIONED SIGNIFICANT TURNOVER IN A NUMBER OF AGENCY COUNSEL OFFICES WHICH LED TO A NEED FOR MORE TRAINING AND INFORMATION-SHARING—AND HOW WE WOULD HANDLE THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES.

THIS WAS TO ENSURE THAT AGENCY HEADS, THEIR SENIOR STAFFS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES GOT MAXIMUM SUPPORT AND APPROPRIATE LEGAL ADVICE THAT WAS CONSISTENT, COORDINATED AND CURRENT. WE BEGAN THAT TASK BUT QUICKLY HAD TO PIVOT IN JANUARY 2025.

SOME OF THE POLICY AND LEGAL SHIFTS MADE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL THAT CAME WITH THE CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIONS REQUIRED THE MOLC TO USE SIGNIFICANT ENERGY AND RESOURCES TO STAY ABREAST OF SUDDEN AND --IN SOME CASES—DRAMATIC CHANGES THAT IMPACTED OUR GOVERNMENT AND CITY RESIDENTS. THIS REFOCUS REQUIRED US TO ANALYZE AND INTERPRET DIFFERENT APPLICATIONS OF THE LAW --OR POLICY--SO WE COULD BETTER ADVISE ON HOW TO PROCEED WHEN OUR LEADERS AND AGENCIES SOUGHT THAT GUIDANCE.

THESE, AS YOU KNOW, HAD A DIRECT AND INDIRECT RIPPLE EFFECT ON OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE UNPRECEDENTED DOWNSIZING OF THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, THE CITY'S BUDGET "DRAMA" FOR FY'25



OCCASIONED BY REAL AND THREATENED FUNDING STOPPAGES, THE STATUS OF IMMIGRANTS AND ON CERTAIN SOCIAL SERVICE BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS. MOLC KEPT UP WITH ALL OF THESE ISSUES AND PREPARED TO ADVISE ON THEM AS THE NEED AROSE SO THAT CITY LEADERS COULD MAKE THEIR BEST DECISIONS ON HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS NEW TERRAIN.

YOU'LL ALSO RECALL THAT THE GOVERNMENT FINALIZED THE DEAL FOR A NEW COMMANDERS STADIUM ON THE OLD RFK SITE, ENDURED CHALLENGES TO HOME RULE AND SURVIVED THE SECOND LONGEST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IN HISTORY. THE MOLC WAS INVOLVED IN SOME WAY SHAPE OR FORM IN THESE EVENTS AS WELL, EITHER BY ANALYZING QUESTIONS AND ISSUES OR BY OFFERING ADVICE WHEN NEEDED.

AS THE FOREGOING RESPONSIBILITIES BECAME THE “NEW NORMAL”, THE PRESIDENT’S “SURGE” BEGAN IN EARLY LAST AUGUST. THERE WAS A 30-DAY “TAKEOVER “OF THE MPD BECAUSE OF A PERCEIVED CRIME PROBLEM, FOLLOWED BY THE INSTALLATION OF OUR OWN NATIONAL GUARD AND MEMBERS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS. THE DEBATES ABOUT THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES—AS WELL AS THEIR TENURE—ARE ONGOING TODAY.

MORE RECENTLY, EFFORTS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON IMMIGRATION-RELATED MATTERS IN THE CITY HAVE REQUIRED ONGOING REVIEWS OF THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AND THE MPD, A PROCESS AND RELATIONSHIP THAT REMAINS FLUID AND UNEASY AND THAT REQUIRES REGULAR ATTENTION.

ALL OF THESE MATTERS HAVE ALSO REQUIRED THE MOLC TO REGULARLY COMMUNICATE WITH THE CITY’S OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ABOUT THE DEFENSIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE LITIGATION THAT AFFECTS THE CITY. IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS, MOLC OPINED ON THE FEASIBILITY OF CERTAIN COURSES OF ACTION OAG SOUGHT TO TAKE, CONVEYED THE EOM’S VIEWS ABOUT THESE CASES, AS WELL AS THE POLICY AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF EACH. THAT PROCESS WAS A SUCCESSFUL ONE. EVEN WHEN THERE WERE SIGNICANT



DISAGREEMENTS, NONE HAVE BEEN PUBLIC AND THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION REMAINED OPEN, AND THE DISCOURSE COLLEGIAL. THESE MATTERS HAVE BEEN ONGOING AND, NO DOUBT, WILL BECOME EVEN MORE SENSITIZED AS THE COUNTRY PREPARES FOR ITS 250TH BIRTHDAY THIS SUMMER, WEEKS AFTER THE MOST IMPACTFUL LOCAL ELECTIONS WE'VE HAD IN RECENT MEMORY. THIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WILL, OF COURSE, BE CENTRALIZED HERE AND WILL REQUIRE ALL PARTS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO WORK IN CONCERT. MOLC'S PORTFOLIO OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS WILL LIKELY EXPAND OUR FOCUS ON THE EXISTING ISSUES TO INCLUDE PREPARATIONS FOR "250".

ALL OF THIS—AS EXCITING AND IMPORTANT AS IT IS--HAS FORCED US TO SPREAD OURSELVES A LITTLE THINNER, RESPOND MORE TO AD HOC QUESTIONS AND ISSUES, WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE OUR CORE SERVICES AND SUPPORT. THIS HAS BEEN MANAGEABLE BECAUSE OF THE MOLC'S OUTSTANDING AND COMMITTED TEAM. THEY CONTINUE TO DO WONDERFUL WORK WITHOUT COMPLAINT AND WITH THE FLEXIBILITY IT OFTEN REQUIRES.

THE AMOUNT OF TURNOVER IN AGENCY COUNSEL OFFICES I MENTIONED LAST YEAR HAS SLOWED—BUT WE'VE FELT IT DIRECTLY AT THE MOLC: TWO STAFFERS GAVE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF THEIR TIME TO OTHER, NEEDY AGENCIES THROUGH DETAILS LASTING BETWEEN 4-6 MONTHS. ANOTHER LAWYER RECENTLY BECAME THE GENERAL COUNSEL FOR ONE OF THE MAYOR'S SUBORDINATE AGENCIES WHILE MY OTHER COLLEAGUES ARE THINKING ABOUT THEIR FUTURES IN LIGHT OF THE MAYOR'S RECENT DECISION TO NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION. BUT MORALE REMAINS HIGH AND WE HAVE NOT YET FELT THE PINCH OF DOING MORE WITH LESS. ALL OF US WILL DO OUR BEST TO ENSURE THAT OUR MAYOR RUNS THROUGH THE TAPE AS SHE HAS PROMISED TO DO.

PIVOTING AGAIN, MADAME CHAIR AND WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'D LIKE TO UPDATE YOU ON ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS: OUR FOIA RESPONSIBILITIES. AGAIN, THANKS TO THE FANTASTIC EFFORTS OF SHAWN NOLEN AND ANDREA STEMPEL, I'M PLEASED TO REPORT THAT WE'RE VIRTUALLY CURRENT ON THOSE OBLIGATIONS. THE ATTACHED CHART WILL PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION YOU NORMALLY



REQUEST AND IT SHOWS YTD TOTALS AS WELL AS OUR PROGRESS WORK OVER THE LAST FOUR FISCAL YEARS, INCLUDING THE 995 CASES AVAILABLE IN THE DC REGISTER AND THE 1400 OR SO ON OUR WEBSITE. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO UPDATE YOU QUARTERLY.

THANK YOU, MADAME CHAIR—THIS CONCLUDES MY TESTIMONY. I'M HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS THAT YOU HAVE.

