

TESTIMONY OF JOSLYN N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL, AFL-CIO
ON THE MAYOR'S NOMINATION OF DONALD WASSERMAN AND ANN HOFFMAN
TO THE
PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

HONORABLE MURIEL BOWSER, CHAIRWOMAN

APRIL 19, 2012

Madame Chair and members of the Committee on Government Operations, my name is Joslyn Williams and I am President of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, which represents 150,000 area union members including 30,000 DC public sector employees.

I am honored to appear before the Committee today to express the strong support of the labor community for Donald Wasserman as the "labor" representative and Ann Hoffman as a "neutral" representative on the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB). We applaud Mayor Vincent Gray for nominating two supremely qualified candidates to the PERB.

As you know, the board determines what employees belong together to bargain collectively for their economic well-being; determines when management or labor has conducted itself in a way that constitutes a legally-recognized unfair labor practice; and determines the outcome of disputes between supervisors and the employees and their elected union representatives. Consequently, the PERB functions as the National Labor Relations Board of the DC public sector. Its rule making affects the everyday lives of District Government employees and their unions. The appointment of qualified management, labor and neutral Board members is extremely important to us. As you may recall, former Mayor Adrian Fenty's lack of timeliness on these appointments resulted in a lack of quorum on the board and his actions adversely impacted employees, unions and the City, as the backlog of cases could not be dealt with. The 30,000 DC government employees we represent rely on this body to adjudicate all disputes related to collective bargaining, organizing and grievances in a timely manner. Therefore, it is critical that this Council fully fund and staff the PERB to help reduce the back-log of cases.

Mr. Wasserman has over 30 years of labor-management relations experience and is currently serving on the PERB. He has been through union representation elections, bargaining unit determination hearings, contract negotiations and dispute resolution. Mr. Wasserman is fully knowledgeable about labor law, most especially public sector labor law, and has a vast body of experience and expertise which will help the PERB maintain its integrity. We fully support him and urge you to reappoint Mr. Wasserman to serve on the PERB.

Ms. Hoffman was a "Public" member of the PERB from 2004 to 2008, appointed and reappointed by Mayor Anthony A. Williams. She has litigated labor and employment discrimination cases on behalf of employers, labor organizations and individuals, thus making her well qualified to serve on the PERB again. Ms. Hoffman is committed to building a better relationship between District agencies and the unions that represent them, and will work diligently to reduce the backlog of cases on file.

On behalf of the labor community, I ask that you swiftly vote favorably on the nomination of both Mr. Wasserman and Ms. Hoffman. We are very confident that they well and truly understand the issues and the law, and will provide the unbiased review of cases so greatly needed for a balanced and productive PERB. Thank you again, Chairman Bowser and members of the Committee. I stand ready to answer any questions you and the Committee members may have.