

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 17, 2007

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**Statement by Joslyn Williams, President
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On DC Council Chair Vincent Gray's
Pending School Legislation**

Washington, DC –

Earlier this today D.C. Council Chair Vincent Gray disclosed his long-awaited proposal to address DC school personnel reform. But like an over-hyped movie, Chairman Gray's legislation fell far short of our expectations. In fact, it is totally unacceptable in its current form.

Stripped of its superficial exclusions and ambiguity, Chairman Gray's proposal echoes the draconian reform bill championed by Mayor Fenty and Chancellor Rhee. In fact, it would expand the Chancellor's unilateral power to fire school employees and gives that same authority to the State Superintendent and Director of Facilities Modernization to fire employees without cause or recourse to appeal.

This is the wrong direction and the wrong signal to send an administration that repeatedly has disrespected parents, community leaders and members of city council – including Chairman Gray himself.

Make no mistake: we do not want to protect incompetent, indifferent or rude School employees. They should be dealt with because they tarnish the reputation and dedication of other hard-working employees who do the best they can under the circumstances with little or no supervision.

But it is also time Chairman Gray and Chancellor Rhee did their homework. They should know that employees who don't do their jobs can be disciplined and fired **right now** in a timely, fair manner using existing managerial power. So there is no need for emergency legislation that creates a new shortcut to discipline bad employees.

We hope other members of City Council will not follow Chairman Gray down this path of spin over substance. Instead, we urge his colleagues to support

alternative legislation that will be co-sponsored by Ward 5 Councilman Harry Thomas, Jr., Ward 8 Councilman Marion Barry, and possibly other Council members.

We support the Thomas-Barry alternative legislation because it offers the best path to achieving high performance in the DCPS central office without punishing workers who do their jobs or stripping them of their due process rights. Their bill also calls for training and re-training of managers and frontline employees in the school central office who have been poorly trained and supervised.

At the end of the day, we believe there is a win-win reform solution for workers, the Council and the community. We will hold elected officials accountable for their votes on this important issue.

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