

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Board of Elections and Ethics
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

DEBORAH K. NICHOLS, Board Chairman

10:33 to 11:15 a.m.
Wednesday, January 6, 2016

One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, N.W., Room 280 North
Washington, DC 20001

OLENDER REPORTING, INC.
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PRESENT:

Board of Elections and Ethics:

DEBORAH K. NICHOLS, Board Chairman
STEPHEN I. DANZANSKY, Board Member
DIONNA M. LEWIS, Board Member
TERRI D. STROUD, Board Acting Executive
Director
RUDOLPH M.D. MCGANN, JR.,
Office of the General Counsel

Board of Elections and Ethics Staff:

KENNETH J. MCGHIE, Office of General Counsel
CLIFFORD D. TATUM, Executive Director

Office of Campaign Finance:

CECILY COLLIER-MONTGOMERY, Director
WILLIAM SANFORD, General Counsel to
Office of Campaign Finance

Public:

DOROTHY BRIZILL, D.C. Watch
WILLIAM H. TAFT, D.C. Local Organizing
Council for Empowerment

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Good morning.
3 Welcome to the Board of Elections Regular Meeting
4 for the month of January, 2016. It is Wednesday,
5 January 6, 2016. The time is 10:37 a.m., and we
6 are meeting in Room 280 North of One Judiciary
7 Square.

8 I am Deborah K. Nichols, Chairman of the
9 Board of Elections. Present with me this morning
10 are Board members Dionna Lewis and Stephen
11 Danzansky. I want to take the opportunity to
12 welcome Ms. Lewis to the Board. We are happy to
13 have her.

14 Also present this morning are Terri
15 Stroud, the Board's Acting Executive Director;
16 Cecily Collier-Montgomery, the Board's Director
17 of Campaign Finance; and Kenneth McGhie, the
18 Board's General Counsel.

19 Without objections the agenda for this
20 morning is adopted, less there are corrections or
21 technical amendments to the minutes. Are there
22 any corrections that need to be made?

1 MR. DANZANSKY: No, Madam Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Okay. Then the
3 minutes of the regular Board meeting of
4 Wednesday, December 2nd, are adopted.

5 Are there any matters that Board members
6 wish to address in this public meeting?

7 [No audible response.]

8 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Hearing none, we
9 will move on to receive the report of the Board's
10 Acting Executive Director, Ms. Stroud.

11 MS. STROUD: Good morning, everyone.

12 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Good morning.

13 MS. STROUD: We are preparing for the
14 start of the 2016 election cycle. The unofficial
15 kickoff date for the 2016 cycle is January 22nd,
16 when the candidates will be coming in to pick up
17 their nominating petitions to gain ballot access.
18 In terms of the party plans that we received,
19 we've received party plans for the conduct of the
20 Presidential Preference Primary from the
21 Democratic Party, and from the Republican Party
22 we've received plans to conduct their elections

1 for Republican National Committee man and woman,
2 and Ward Chairpersons for the D.C. Republican
3 Committee.

4 We are currently reviewing and updating
5 forms that will be included in our candidate
6 packets, and also in our absentee ballot package
7 mailings, which will go out in time to comply
8 with our obligation to meet the 45-day deadline
9 for absentee ballots to be transmitted to UOCAVA
10 voters, so we're on track for that.

11 As you are aware, Board members, last
12 year the Council enacted the Primary Date
13 Alteration Act, which moved the district's
14 primary elections back to June, from April, for
15 216 -- 2016, rather -- and to September,
16 beginning in 2018. The most significant changes
17 resulting from this legislation are that same-day
18 registrants who provide proper residence will now
19 go to regular live ballot, where, in the past,
20 they voted a special ballot; voters will no
21 longer be allowed to vote outside of their
22 assigned precinct; all absentee ballots must be

1 received by no later than the close of polls on
2 election day; and the time frame for the post-
3 election review of special ballots will be
4 condensed.

5 And so we're preparing for these changes
6 by updating our materials and forms for purposes
7 of coworker training, for voter outreach, and
8 just making sure that the public and everyone
9 impacted is aware of the changed, based on the
10 Primary Date Alteration Act. So we're kicking
11 off our preparations for this election cycle, and
12 again, it starts on January 22nd with the
13 beginning of the ballot access period.

14 And that's my report.

15 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, Ms.
16 Stroud. Are there any questions of Ms. Stroud?

17 [No audible response.]

18 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right. Hearing
19 none, we will move on to the Report of our
20 General Counsel, Mr. McGhie.

21 MR. MCGHIE: Yes. The first matter on my
22 agenda is Office of Campaign Finance Petitions

1 for Enforcements, so at this time I would like to
2 ask Mr. Rudolph McGann, from my office, to step
3 forward, and Mr. William Sanford from the Office
4 of Campaign Finance to step forward.

5 There are a total of six petitions for
6 enforcement, those being Carter At-Large, 2014 --

7 ATTENDEE: Can you speak up please?

8 MR. MCGHIE: -- Bruce Majors, Libertarian
9 for Mayor; Martin Sterbal for U.S. Senate; Bell
10 for Ward 8; Gaston 2015; and Whitaker 4 Ward 4.

11 MR. MCGANN: Good morning. The first
12 petition is Docket Number 14C-086, Christian
13 Carter At-Large, and Christian Carter is the
14 Treasurer. The missing filing is Report of
15 Receipts and Expenditures for December 10th. The
16 fine amount is \$2,000. The OCF order date was
17 February 26, 2015. The effective date of that
18 order was March 20, 2015.

19 The Board served hearings for a pre-
20 hearing conference on January 13, 2015, and
21 January 29th, and those hearings were held on
22 January 27th and February 11th, and at this time

1 the payment was due on April the 3rd of 2015, and
2 the Board has not been able to hold a pre-
3 hearing. The parties have not been responsive.
4 So at this time the Office of Campaign Finance is
5 petitioning the Board for the order to be
6 enforced in court.

7 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: We would like to do
8 these all together, so if you will go on and do
9 the summaries now --

10 MR. McGANN: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: -- we will read
12 them --

13 MR. McGANN: The next docket is Bruce
14 Majors, Libertarian for Mayor. Treasurer was
15 Bruce Majors. The missing report is the December
16 10th Report of Receipts and Expenditures. The
17 order date was February 26, 2015, in the amount
18 of \$2,000. Hearings for pre-hearings were served
19 on the 13th of January and the 29th of January,
20 for meetings scheduled on the 28th of January and
21 the 11th of February, and the respondent did not
22 appear either of those pre-hearings.

1 The third matter is 14C-097, Martin
2 Sterbal for U.S. Senate. That is a missing
3 December 10th Receipt Expenditures Report. The
4 OCF order was effective on February 26th of 2015.
5 The Board had tried to hold hearings on January
6 13th -- excuse me -- January 28th and February
7 11th. Mr. Sterbal did not appear. The fine
8 amount was \$2,000.

9 The next Docket Number is 15C-003, Bell
10 for Ward 8, Milton Bell, Treasurer. The report
11 missing was a January 31st Report of Receipts and
12 Expenditures. The order date was April 1st,
13 2015, in the amount of \$2,000. The Board
14 attempted to hold pre-hearing conferences on
15 February 23rd and March 23rd of 2015. Bell did
16 not appear at either of those pre-hearing
17 conferences.

18 The next matter is 15C-005, Gaston 2015.
19 Joe Davis was the Treasurer. The report that was
20 missing was a January 31st Report of Receipts and
21 Expenditures. The fine amount is \$2,000. The
22 pre-hearings were scheduled on February 23rd and

1 March 23rd, and Mr. Davis did not appear at
2 either of those pre-hearing conferences.

3 And the final matter is Whitaker 4 Ward
4 4. Robert Whitaker is Treasurer. The missing
5 report was a January 31st Report of Receipts and
6 Expenditures. The amount of the fine was \$2,000,
7 and the order was on April 1st of 2015. The
8 Board attempted to hold hearings on February 23rd
9 and March 23rd of 2015, and again the amount was
10 \$2,000.

11 And none of the respondents appeared
12 before the Office of General Counsel's pre-
13 hearing attempts and they were sent notice of
14 this by first-class mail and e-mail
15 correspondence.

16 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right. Thank
17 you, Mr. McGann. We'll entertain a motion to
18 authorize the Board's Office of the General
19 Counsel to enforce the Office of Campaign
20 Finances Orders of Enforcement for the cases of
21 Carter At-Large, 2014; Bruce Majors, Libertarian
22 for Mayor; Martin Sterbal for U.S. Senate; Bell

1 for Ward 8; Gaston for 2015; and Whitaker 4 Ward
2 4.

3 MR. DANZANSKY: So moved, Madam Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right. All in
5 favor?

6 [Chorus of ayes.]

7 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All opposed?

8 [No audible response.]

9 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Ayes have it. Mr.
10 McGhie.

11 MR. DANZANSKY: Yes. The last item on my
12 agenda is just a litigation status update, and
13 the only matter that is in court right now is
14 *Harry Wingo v. the Board*. The Board is very
15 familiar with that case. I've reported it on it
16 for the last 3 months. That matter involved a
17 challenge to the Board's short title and summary
18 statement on Initiative No. 76. The complaint
19 was filed on August 21st, 2015. Both parties --
20 all the parties involved, including the
21 intervener, have filed motions or cross motions
22 for summary judgment, so the matter has been

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1 completely briefed. It is before Judge Ross, and
2 Judge Ross has read our papers and has scheduled
3 a status hearing, I guess to report on his
4 conclusion, on January 29th.

5 And that would conclude my litigation
6 status update.

7 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, Mr.
8 McGhie. Are there any questions of Mr. McGhie?

9 MR. DANZANSKY: Just one question. Mr.
10 McGhie, do we have any idea as to when -- if
11 there's a status hearing, when the motion might
12 be heard?

13 MR. MCGHIE: They did argue. They argued
14 --

15 MR. DANZANSKY: It's already been argued?

16 MR. MCGHIE: Yes.

17 MR. DANZANSKY: I see. Okay. Okay.
18 Okay. So this is just a status, and then the
19 judge will render his decision.

20 MR. MCGHIE: Yes.

21 MR. DANZANSKY: Okay. Hopefully in time
22 for the election.

1 MR. McGHIE: Yes.

2 MR. DANZANSKY: Okay. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right. All
4 right. We will move to receive the report of the
5 Director of Campaign Finance, Ms. Collier-
6 Montgomery.

7 MS. COLLIER-MONTGOMERY: Yes. Good
8 morning. During the month of December in the
9 Office of the Campaign Finance, there was one
10 reporting date, and that was the December 10th
11 due date for the filing of Reports of Receipts
12 and Expenditures. There were 88 required
13 filings, there were 29 principal campaign
14 committees, and 59 political action committees.
15 We had 75 committees who timely filed. We had 1
16 request for an extension, and that was granted.
17 We had one late filer. The total number of
18 failures to file were 12, and we had 13 referrals
19 to the Office of the General Counsel. All 75 of
20 the timely filings electronically filed their
21 reports.

22 The referrals to the Office of the

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1 General Council for the failure to file the
2 December 10th report were Bell for Ward 8, Milton
3 Bell, Treasurer; Whitaker 4 Ward 4, Robert
4 Whitaker, Treasurer; Barry for Council, Marian
5 Christopher Barry, Treasurer; Toliver for Ward 4,
6 Dwayne Toliver, Treasurer; Ward 8 for Muhammad,
7 Anthony Hovington, Treasurer; Committee to Elect
8 Judi Jones, James Elie, Treasurer; Trayon White
9 for Ward 8 2015, Trayon White, Treasurer.

10 With respect to the political action
11 committees which were referred to the general
12 counsel, they are 1199 SEIU PAC, George Gresham,
13 Treasurer; Ward 7 Democrats, Derek Ford,
14 Treasurer; Citizens for Empowerment, Brett
15 McMahan, Treasurer; Ward 4 Democrats, Kimberly
16 Tignor, Treasurer; Ward 2 Democrats, Patrick
17 Kennedy, Treasurer; PASS, Robert Bonfilio,
18 Treasurer.

19 We had new candidates and committees who
20 registered during the month of December, 2015.
21 They are as follows: Robert White, Robert White
22 At-Large 2016, At-Large City Council Member, who

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1 registered on December the 11th, 2015; LaRuby
2 May, Reelect LaRuby May Ward 8 City Council. The
3 date of registration was December the 14th, 2015.
4 Jill Homan, Homan for D.C. NCW, Republican
5 National Committeewoman, registered 12/15/2015.
6 The Higher Ground PAC, registered on December the
7 14th, 2015.

8 The entrance conferences for these new
9 registrants are scheduled on January the 12th,
10 2016.

11 We also conducted entrance conferences
12 during the month of December, on December the
13 3rd, and the participants were Ed Potillo,
14 Candidate, Potillo for Council, Carlton Rectland,
15 Treasurer, Potillo for Council; Drew Franklin,
16 Candidate, Drew for D.C., Danielle Sigwalt,
17 Treasurer, Drew for D.C.; Gabriela Mossi,
18 Chairperson, D.C. Latino Caucus, Jaime Alonso,
19 Treasurer, D.C. Latino Caucus, Claudia Barragan,
20 official of the D.C. Latino Caucus.

21 During the month of December, in our
22 reports analysis is an audit division. The audit

1 division conducted 75 desk reviews of Reports of
2 Receipts and Expenditures, which were filed with
3 us, and they also issued 21 letters for
4 additional information.

5 In terms of our ongoing audits, with
6 full-field audits, investigative audits, we have
7 Gray for Mayor. With our newly elected officials
8 for 2014 and 2015 we have LaRuby May 2015,
9 Brandon Todd for Ward 4, Brianne for D.C., Elissa
10 2014. With the periodic random audits of our
11 continuing committees with respect to the January
12 31st, 2015, filing we have Morgan for D.C. With
13 our constituent service programs, concerning the
14 October 1st, 2015, filing, we have Yvette
15 Alexander Constituent Service Fund. We also
16 issued audit reports during the month of December
17 with the D.C. Proud Committee, on December 14th,
18 2015; Eric Jones 2014, November 23rd, 2015; Fresh
19 PAC, 11/25/2015; the Libertarian Party of D.C. on
20 November 30th, 2015; and the Citizens Outreach
21 Fund Constituent Service Fund, December 17th,
22 2015.

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1 The audit reports are available for the
2 public review at the website of the Office of
3 Campaign Finance.

4 I would ask the general counsel, William
5 Sanford, to provide the report for the Office of
6 the General Counsel.

7 MR. SANFORD: Good morning, Madam Chair,
8 and distinguished Board members. My name is
9 William Sanford, General Counsel for the Office
10 of Campaign Finance.

11 During the month of December, 2015, the
12 Office of the General Counsel received 13
13 referrals from the Public Information and
14 Management Division. The Office of the General
15 Counsel conducted two informal hearings and
16 issued three orders which included the following:
17 two orders for failure to timely file, reports in
18 which no fines were imposed, and one order was
19 issued pursuant to a motion for reconsideration,
20 in which a fine of \$500 was imposed.

21 The Office of the General Counsel imposed
22 a \$500 fine against Darrell Gaston, a candidate

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1 for ANC in the 2014 election.

2 During the month of December, 2015, the
3 Office of the General Counsel collected fines
4 from the following respondents: \$225 from Mark
5 Jones, from the Mark Jones Reelection Committee
6 for School Board; \$125 from the Ward 6 Democrats;
7 \$200 from Beverly Wheeler, Beverly Wheeler for
8 Ward 1; and \$100 from John LaBeaume, for the Ward
9 1 candidacy for the Counsel from Ward 1.

10 During the month of December, 2015, the
11 Office of the General Counsel maintained a total
12 of seven active investigations and no new
13 investigations were initiated.

14 During the month of December, there were
15 no requests for petition for interpretive
16 opinions, and there were no show cause
17 proceedings conducted.

18 And that should conclude my report.

19 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Are there any
20 questions of Mr. Sanford?

21 MR. DANZANSKY: Just one. Just a matter
22 of information, Mr. Counsel, is this -- is this

1 Bell for Ward 8 committee that's been referred to
2 your office the same one that we just levied a
3 fine against?

4 MR. SANFORD: This is -- it's -- it's the
5 same respondent, for a different report that they
6 failed to file.

7 MR. DANZANSKY: Okay. Thank you.

8 MR. SANFORD: You are welcome.

9 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right. Thank
10 you, Mr. Sanford.

11 All right. Are there any members of the
12 public who wish to bring matters before the Board
13 this morning? Yes, sir. Come to the table
14 please. Come, Ms. Brizill, and identify yourself
15 for the record.

16 MS. BRIZILL: Good morning.

17 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Good morning.

18 MS. BRIZILL: My name is Dorothy Brizill,
19 B-r-i-z-i-l-l. I'm Executive Director of D.C.
20 Watch, and my residence -- permanent residence is
21 1327 Girard Street N.W.

22 I have a matter I'd like to raise with

1 the Board, and I don't know whether or not you
2 can respond with information. As the Board may
3 or may not know, the Council has scheduled
4 hearings on two matters on January 14th, Bill 21-
5 0193, the Ballot Access Modernization Amendment
6 Act of 2015, and Bill 21-0194, the Automatic
7 Voter Registration Amendment Act of 2015.

8 And when you read the bills in their
9 really in very sketchy and skeletal format, I
10 have several concerns, and I wanted to know -- I
11 wanted to raise with the Board concerns that I
12 had, because this would be the final Board
13 meeting before the actual hearing on January
14 14th.

15 With regard to Bill 21-0193, the Ballot
16 Access Modernization Amendment Act, what it would
17 do, in essence, would allow signatures to be
18 gathered by candidates and initiative and
19 referendum proponents on a tablet, and so, rather
20 than the usual hard paper that we're all used to.

21 I have several concerns in terms of --
22 and I've had a conversation with the author of

1 the bill, Charles Allen, yesterday at the Wilson
2 Building. I have concerns with regard to how
3 this witness signature requirement would be met.

4 The legislation also requires a mobile
5 app to be developed, by the Board, I assume, and
6 paid for by the Board, that would allow
7 connectivity to the Board's voter database, and
8 with that, I don't know if that is possible in
9 terms of an outside party, or a third party
10 having access to your voter database, and that
11 raises, also, security questions.

12 And my fourth major concern has to do
13 with cost. It calls for the Board to provide
14 candidates with tablets, as well as to develop an
15 app, and all of this is supposed to be done
16 within 180 days of passage of the legislation,
17 which would put us smack dab in the middle of an
18 election year.

19 I am terribly concerned. I have not
20 signed up as a witness, and I do not know whether
21 or not my schedule will permit me to be a
22 witness. But I certainly will raise concerns in

1 testimony.

2 Let me just tell you my overall arching
3 concern. In my conversation with Mr. Allen, I
4 asked him whether or not, in developing the
5 legislation, he had talked to anyone or had some
6 assurance that the technology was there to
7 mechanically do what his legislation calls for,
8 and his only and sole response on two occasions
9 in our conversation was to say, "Well, other
10 states and jurisdictions do this."

11 The other bill that I'm concerned about
12 is Bill 21-0194, the Automatic Voter Registration
13 Amendment Act of 2015, which would amend the
14 process -- substantially amend the process by
15 which the Board receives new voter registrations
16 -- voter registrants from the Department of Motor
17 Vehicles, and as I read the legislation, it would
18 assume that when they went to register, or to do
19 any business, change address or anything, at DMV,
20 that a record should be generated and immediately
21 transferred to the Board of Elections, unless an
22 individual did an opt-out on the application.

1 And it would, in essence, require the DMV to
2 capture all sorts of information, which I don't
3 believe they capture now, and that I would have
4 concerns about privacy issues.

5 So, again, I don't know whether or not
6 the new Executive Director has had an opportunity
7 to look at the legislation as well as had the
8 benefit of her legal counsel, but I just wanted
9 to raise this as being on my radar screen, and
10 what particularly concerns me is that you have
11 seven members of the Council who have signed on
12 to the bill, and when you ask them, they don't
13 know the details of the bill, they don't know
14 whether or not it can practically be implemented,
15 moreover, to call for this to be implemented
16 within 180 days of passage by the Council. That
17 would be within an election year, raises concern.
18 And I don't need to raise with the Board the fact
19 that we've had problems over the years with
20 regard to serious fraud, with regard to petitions
21 that have been submitted.

22 So the extent to which we can ameliorate

1 fraud or prevent fraud forward, the extent to
2 which we're opening the doors and say y'all come,
3 raises even more concerns.

4 So, again, I just wanted to come this
5 morning and raise this with the Board, and put it
6 on your radar screen.

7 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you so much,
8 Ms. Brizill. Mr. McGhie, or Ms. Stroud, would
9 you like to speak to at least our awareness, and
10 our plan to testify?

11 MR. MCGHIE: Well, I can tell you that we
12 -- we -- we were not consulted on this
13 legislation or by the D.C. Council before they
14 introduced it, and, in fact, we were not even
15 sent a copy of the legislation after it was
16 introduced, asking us to testify on it. We got
17 the copy of the legislation second hand, and so
18 we do plan on testifying on the legislation. We
19 share your concerns. There are some of the
20 concerns that you raise, with respect to the
21 circulators and how you're going to verify their
22 signatures and some other things as well, and we

1 are preparing the testimony.

2 MS. STROUD: I would reiterate, I mean, I
3 just want to piggyback on what Mr. McGhie said,
4 we did not receive this legislation directly, and
5 the legislation that we did receive was related
6 to only the Automatic Voter Registration
7 Amendment Act and not the Ballot Access
8 Modernization Act, and that was from the Director
9 of the DMV. And so she was the one that alerted
10 us to the existence of a legislation.

11 We are researching what other
12 jurisdictions are doing. One that comes to mind,
13 in terms of the mobile app that they are
14 suggesting, what I believe to be a pilot program
15 for -- there's a program that they used in
16 Denver. I believe the company is called eSign,
17 and just for bare bones information about how
18 that works, they do allow the -- the tablets do
19 access the Denver voter registration database,
20 and what happens is the -- the Board of Elections
21 there, I guess, provides tablets to be used by
22 the circulators or the campaigns, and a deposit

1 is paid for the tablets. And so if something
2 happens to the tablet, you can't return it. But
3 we're just looking into what other jurisdictions
4 are doing on this front, and considering the pros
5 and cons.

6 But again, as Mr. McGhie said, we were
7 not alerted to this legislation prior to being
8 put on the table.

9 MS. BRIZILL: Well, if I could just add
10 two other things, I guess. Number one is that
11 there are a number of members of the Council who
12 have a growing penchant for going on the
13 Internet, and seeing something on the Internet,
14 and immediately writing a bill, not once pausing
15 to question its applicability or whether or not
16 it would work in the district, and then not
17 picking up the phone and saying, "Does our
18 technology or do our laws allow for it?" So this
19 is one of them. I mean, Mr. Allen was very
20 clear. He saw it on the Internet and he said,
21 "Why not do it in D.C.?"

22 The second thing is that I think there

1 are probably anywhere between eight and ten bills
2 currently before the Council, dealing with
3 various aspects of campaign finance or election
4 law, and the current chair of the Judiciary
5 Committee has done a very reasonable job in terms
6 of stewardship and doing a push-back. But
7 they're reaching a critical mass now of seven
8 members who are signing on to these bills, and
9 not know what's the details of the bills. I
10 mean, there's one bill, the weighted voting bill,
11 that I asked the author, in two meetings, to
12 explain it to me, and he couldn't even explain
13 the provisions of it to me.

14 But the point I was going to make is
15 getting to a point where you have seven members
16 who are signing on to this, and they don't know
17 what's in the bill, and they don't particularly
18 care for how it be implemented. One even told
19 me, "Well, we pass the law. It will be up to
20 them to implement it."

21 So I'm really concerned, and especially
22 since I know all that's on your plate in an

1 election year, and, and this -- my concern is
2 that this is not just an academic exercise, that
3 at some point one of these is going to get out.

4 MS. STROUD: I want to just say for the
5 record, as you probably already know, Ms.
6 Brizill, that back in 2010 we submitted a report
7 to the Council pursuant to the Omnibus Election
8 Reform Act, concerning the feasibility of
9 automatic voter registration. And so I don't know
10 --

11 MS. BRIZILL: Okay -- 2010?

12 MS. STROUD: 2010.

13 MS. BRIZILL: I'll look for the report.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, Ms.
16 Brizill.

17 MR. TAFT: Good morning, and Happy New
18 Year to the Board.

19 [Chorus of good mornings.]

20 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Good morning to you
21 also. Would you please identify yourself for the
22 record.

1 MR. TAFT: I most certainly will.

2 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right.

3 MR. TAFT: First of all, I want to thank
4 you all for the hard job y'all got to do, and
5 y'all do the best y'all can do.

6 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, sir.

7 MR. TAFT: We don't always make it.
8 We're just human, so I want to put that out
9 front.

10 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you.

11 MR. TAFT: My name is William H. Taft,
12 and I am the CEO for the D.C. Local Organizing
13 Council for Empowerment. This is an outgrowth of
14 the Million Man March, the men trying to do stuff
15 in their community.

16 Since that time to now, I wrote the
17 anthem for the Million Man March and we wrote a
18 theme song to honor Dr. King and the Voting
19 Rights Act. The co-author of that song was
20 Williams Crews, that was a career person in D.C.
21 He wrote many songs for D.C. that has helped the
22 citizens, including the one song, that continues

1 to make money today. He's never asked for any
2 money. He's never done anything. He's just
3 devoted himself totally.

4 Now, this song was done in 1992. The
5 name of the song is "U.S. Voters Twin National
6 Anthem For a More Perfect Union, USA, D.C."
7 because they can't be perfect unless USA and D.C.
8 are one.

9 So there's two songs in this particular
10 set. One of them is "USA Let's Register and
11 Vote" and "USA Let's Get Out the Vote." Under
12 your Board Director Miller, 2004, I came before
13 the Board and introduced it and granted it to the
14 Board to use as a palette, because at the time I
15 was seeking a contract for y'all to lease it. I
16 said, "Well, I'll waiver that." Let's prove it,
17 that we need to get the people out to vote.
18 That's our job. That's the constitution. So
19 they did use it, and voter registration did
20 increase.

21 It originally was used when Marion Barry
22 said he wasn't going to run anymore, and nobody

1 wanted to vote. So we used it in all the city,
2 driving around in cars, blowing bullhorns, and
3 they finally registered the votes. Each time
4 it's interfaced with this Board, voter
5 registration went up.

6 Now I'm here to challenge the Board today
7 because last year y'all -- the audit said it was
8 not effective in our election, and since then, as
9 of January of last year, a terrorist threat
10 happened. January of last year, a year ago. So
11 since then we've had the bombings out there.
12 Everything has been increased. Homeland Security
13 says now we've got create a new alert system,
14 because it's increasing. But nobody's done
15 anything around voting, and if I'm a terrorist,
16 that's where I'm going to hit y'all the most,
17 because you all are right together.

18 So I want D.C. to be protected. I've
19 been trying since 2004, really 2000, to get this
20 song adopted by this Board, and the mayors.
21 Every mayor that has come endorsed it and liked
22 the song. I just found out recently that they

1 couldn't do nothing because of the Hatch Act. No
2 one ever told me that. So great, the people want
3 -- the governed want to do their responsibility
4 that's ordered them by the Constitution. It's
5 your duty and obligation as a citizen to register
6 and vote. For what reason? To create a more
7 perfect union. However, the Board has not been
8 effective in generating those votes, unless it's
9 an election year. What about a non-election
10 year? In times it's not even about that. You
11 still should be doing the job of registering
12 people to vote, in a more effective manner.

13 This song will do that. Ms. Miller did
14 use it, and the following Board said "we're not
15 going to do it" and they tried to get some stars
16 or something to do it. I said, "Why? We have a
17 song right here."

18 All right. So I'm back in front of the
19 Board now. I've submitted the tracks to the
20 Board. I don't know if you have them here. I
21 have a CD if you want to hear it. If not, I'll
22 save you one for later. But each one of the

1 verses in the song educates the young people why
2 they should vote. Voting is a confirmation of
3 your proclamation to make a difference through
4 participation. To take control of your
5 situation, just register and vote. Your vote
6 gives you clout, to elevate your self-respect and
7 hope, so you can communicate a better direction
8 through your chosen candidate. So wake up --
9 register to vote.

10 These are the messages in the song. The
11 young folks are listening to music, not
12 politicians. So if we want to get them involved
13 in this electoral process, and respecting public
14 administration, we have to give them the tools
15 that they need. This is a tool that can do that,
16 and I'm confident that upon adopting it and
17 making it the official song of this Board, this
18 Board can lead the whole nation to honor Dr. King
19 and the Voting Rights Act, which didn't happen
20 last year. I was very upset by that.

21 I have been working since 2000, coming up
22 to that date, and knowing it was coming, and

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1 nothing happened, from the President, Congress,
2 all -- I've talked to Black Caucus, everybody.
3 There's so much apathy around voting, so it's
4 very difficult, and no one sees music as the tool
5 for voting. It's for entertainment. Nope, this
6 is infomercial, to tell them why they vote and
7 then go do it.

8 So I'm confident that such a -- I was
9 working with your voter registration outreach.
10 Those guys are like, "Yeah, we need that." So
11 they know, they know. So I saw them outside.
12 They said, "This is good. I didn't know what
13 y'all --." So I want to get with them and
14 organize how more civic involvement can get
15 involved to support that branch, and do it on a
16 regular basis, put it in the library, put it over
17 your voice mail. When you're waiting to listen
18 it says "register and vote." It's just too many
19 ways it can be used.

20 So I wanted to give that overview,
21 present a resolution to y'all. So today if
22 you'll just consider what I've said, and consider

1 the fact that y'all will consider listening to
2 the CD, and receiving a draft resolution to adopt
3 and/or challenge the Council when you go there on
4 the 14th -- because I'm going to be there. It
5 doesn't make any sense why we -- the people can't
6 support themselves. It does not make sense to
7 me.

8 So I'm encouraged by the new Board that's
9 here. I'm very encouraged, encouraged by this
10 year, and I want this Board to lead the nation.
11 So once you adopt it, then I want you to take it
12 to your National Association of Boards of
13 Elections. As a chapter member, I want you to
14 introduce a resolution there for all the other
15 boards to follow D.C. We're the only one in the
16 country where taxation without representation is,
17 so we should lead the nation. We should lead the
18 nation on this thing around voter registration
19 and Voting Rights Act.

20 So now that the song is there in the
21 Board of Elections, now maybe the citizens can
22 consider more being involved in fighting for our

1 Voting Rights Act or statehood. Those
2 conversations are falling because they have no
3 connect. There is no connect.

4 So I'm confident this music may be able
5 to do what none of us could do, and let's just
6 keep it there so when all of us are dead, we
7 honor Dr. King, we did our job, and the people
8 are still getting to be involved in the
9 democratic process of America. That's the most
10 important thing to get. We cannot let that
11 Voting Rights Act die up there. Our adopting
12 here may push Congress to pass it. That's what
13 I'm challenging this Board to take on. Look at
14 that. The citizens got -- I've been to all of
15 them. I'm tired of playing politician. I'm not
16 a politician. I'm coming to the people that can
17 make a different.

18 All right. So, that's my plea for the
19 day. I hope that you receive my recommendations
20 and I look forward to meeting with you --

21 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Okay.

22 MR. TAFT: -- and when you have time off

1 the Board, you know, just to review what I'm
2 saying --

3 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Okay.

4 MR. TAFT: -- and the possibilities of
5 this, because I'm just excited about it, and the
6 man has a track record. William Crews is known.
7 He wrote the song when we had the 911. He wrote
8 the anthem to get tourism back up. He wrote that
9 other. He's wrote too many pieces of music that
10 has not been respected in D.C., and it's got to
11 stop, you know.

12 So I really want you all to consider
13 adopting a resolution and adopting this official
14 song. I don't know process. I don't know if I
15 have to go through the mayor, if I have to go
16 through the City Council, so that's why I'm here,
17 because you are the one with final approval. So
18 I want to know exactly the panel to -- the way to
19 do that, because I'm leaving here, coming to that
20 meeting on the 14th, I'm going to Black Caucus,
21 and I'm sending a copy to the President. So I
22 hope that he will adopt it, because he said down

1 in Selma, "As Selma goes, so do we." So we need
2 to make sure we get that Voting Rights Act done.

3 So I'm ready to get it to him, and then
4 every Board of Election in the country is using
5 it. I'm challenging him, the President, to put
6 it in every Postal Service office. When you go
7 do your mail, that can be playing as background
8 music. "Register and vote." Here's your form
9 right here. Think how many people we can
10 register. Why can't it be in every library? Why
11 can't it be at the school when -- oh, you got no
12 seniors in there. They're doing the correct way.
13 They can play that in the morning. It's just 3
14 minutes.

15 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: All right.

16 MR. TAFT: It's only 3 minutes. It's not
17 taking no time off nobody. It's nothing. But
18 it's enlightening and encouraging them. So
19 that's my commitment. I hope that y'all receive
20 me and give me an appointment to sit down and
21 discuss this matter, and we can move forward.

22 I thank you kindly for your opportunity

1 to speak today.

2 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, Mr.
3 Taft. Are there any questions of Mr. Taft?

4 MS. LEWIS: I -- I actually do have a
5 question. So you mentioned that this song was
6 played, I guess, multiple times during election
7 cycles. What wards were they played in, and do
8 you have any actual data that kind of shows the
9 correlation of voter turnout with the playing of
10 this song, because you said it's a 3-minute song.
11 So I'm just kind of curious of the actual
12 dynamics of this song, in which it was played,
13 and how you arrived at the conclusion that there
14 was a correlation between the increase in voter
15 turnout and this song being played.

16 MR. TAFT: The determination that came
17 from the records, by this Board, that year, with
18 Ms. Alice Miller. In addition, please look
19 online at William Taft PSA on YouTube. I sung
20 one verse the year before President Obama first
21 ran. I sung one verse -- William Taft PSA on
22 YouTube. There are 550,000 people that heard

1 that song and went and registered and voted for
2 that President. They got him in there. I've
3 proven the track record. It's done. It's done.

4 So I'm confident once he sees those
5 numbers there, that he will adopt it for the
6 nation, but I want us to lead him. We should be
7 leading him. He should come back and support our
8 city. That's what I'm up to. You know, so
9 550,000 people shows -- and it's growing. It's
10 still growing -- and I'm not a singer, okay? I'm
11 a drummer. They were mad at me. Why did you try
12 to sing it? They were mad at me. But because I
13 wasn't a singer, they had a regular person that
14 could sing, and it made sense, you know.

15 I said, "Okay, America, guess what? The
16 Founding Fathers gave us a gift. It's an
17 interactive gift, and it's of no use if you don't
18 activate it. It's called the American Vote, and
19 if we activate it, we can create a more perfect
20 union. So let's get on our pathway towards doing
21 that." That's the opening statements that's on
22 the song.

1 MS. LEWIS: Okay. Great. Thank you.

2 MR. TAFT: So I think that, you know, you
3 see there that it does work and I'm confident.
4 I'm asking the American -- Americans for the Arts
5 to adopt this song and carry it to the music
6 industry so all artists -- I mean, artists that's
7 in a concert. In the middle of their break,
8 between that show and that show, for 20 minutes,
9 they can say, "Go down there and register." All
10 them kids will register, because they're
11 listening to the artists. They ain't listening
12 to y'all. So they play the record, it makes
13 sense, and then they tell them to go do it, and
14 then we've got all them young people involved.
15 It's a tool that can't -- you don't have nothing
16 like it nowhere. We must adopt this in America.

17 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: Thank you, Mr.
18 Taft.

19 MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

20 MR. TAFT: Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON NICHOLS: We appreciate it.
22 Thank you.

1 There being no further business before,
2 this meeting is adjourned. The time is 11:18
3 a.m. It is still Wednesday, January 6th, 2016.

4 [Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the Regular
5 Board Meeting was adjourned.]

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