



Salim Adofo

Commissioner

Single Member District 8C07

Official Testimony to the Council of the District of Columbia

Committee on

Judiciary & Public Safety Public Hearing

Bill 26-0702

the First Responders Facilities Modernization Act of 2026

Wednesday, September 23, 2026



To: Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Bill 26-0702, the First Responders Facilities Modernization Act of 2026

To the Council of the District of Columbia:

I support Bill 26-0702, the First Responders Facilities Modernization Act of 2026, because the men and women who serve our communities as firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and law enforcement officers deserve safe, healthy, modern, and well-maintained facilities in which to work. The condition of our public safety facilities is not only a workplace issue; it is also a matter of employee wellness, government accountability, community investment, and the quality of public safety services provided to District residents.

I respectfully ask the Council to consider the following recommendations as it moves this legislation forward.

First, increase funding for capital planning. I recommend providing a minimum of **\$250,000 for the Metropolitan Police Department and \$250,000 for DC Fire and EMS** to conduct comprehensive assessments of their facilities and develop long-term capital improvement and modernization plans. We cannot adequately address our infrastructure needs without first understanding the condition of our facilities, identifying deficiencies, establishing priorities, and determining the resources necessary to address them.

Second, prioritize the needs of Ward 8. I recommend requiring a comprehensive **Ward 8 First Responder Facilities Needs Assessment**. This assessment should examine the physical condition of existing facilities, service demands, response needs, staffing considerations, infrastructure deficiencies, and anticipated future needs. Ward 8 residents and first responders deserve confidence that our communities will receive appropriate consideration as the District determines where and how modernization investments are made.

Third, strengthen accountability for facility maintenance. The District should establish a clear and formal process for documenting, tracking, prioritizing, and resolving maintenance issues within first responder facilities. When a deficiency is identified, there should be accountability for determining who is responsible, when corrective action will occur, and whether the problem has actually been resolved. Maintenance problems should not be allowed to remain outstanding indefinitely.



Fourth, make first responder wellness part of facility modernization. Our first responders routinely work in demanding, high-stress environments. The buildings in which they work should support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Modernization plans should therefore include dedicated spaces for wellness, recovery, and decompression. Depending on the needs and design of individual facilities, these could include meditation and yoga spaces, quiet rooms, saunas, comfortable relaxation areas, and other restorative amenities.

These should not simply be viewed as luxuries. Supporting the wellness of the people we depend upon during emergencies should be considered an important component of building a healthy and sustainable public safety workforce.

Finally, our facilities should reflect the dignity and value of the people who work in them and the communities they serve. From an African Psychology perspective, people do not exist separately from their environments. Our surroundings can influence our sense of connection, belonging, pride, restoration, and well-being.

We should therefore create first responder facilities that communicate through their design and condition that the people working inside them are valued. Safe, clean, functional, welcoming, and thoughtfully designed environments can contribute to morale, cohesion, wellness, productivity, and a stronger sense of community.

Bill 26-0702 presents the District with an opportunity to think beyond simply repairing aging buildings. This legislation can establish a broader vision for how we invest in the people who protect and serve our communities.

I urge the Council, as it considers Bill 26-0702, to provide adequate resources for long-term capital planning, establish stronger maintenance accountability, examine the specific needs of Ward 8, incorporate first responder wellness into facility design, and ensure that modernization results in facilities that reflect dignity, care, and respect.

Our first responders show up for District residents every day. The facilities we provide for them should demonstrate that the District is equally committed to showing up for them.