



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER BROOKE PINTO
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 106
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

September 18, 2023

Nyasha Smith, Secretary
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Secretary Smith,

Today, I, along with Councilmembers Robert White, Christina Henderson, Charles Allen, and Vincent Gray am introducing the “Government Recruitment and Retention Act of 2023.” Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation.

In recent years, a number of District agencies—and, notably, several of our agencies responsible for public safety—have experienced long-term, heightened vacancies among mission-critical positions. Those vacancies have had a direct impact those agencies’ ability to administer agency programs, provide services to residents, and meet legislative mandates. For example, as of March 2023, . the Office of Unified Communications (“OUC”) reported 31.2% (29 of 93) of 911 call-taker positions were vacant, as well as 15.6% (13 of 82) of 911 call dispatchers. In late summer, OUC Director Heather McGaffin reported that OUC had some success bringing on new staff, but 20.7% of positions still remained vacant. The Director noted that about 40% of work shifts in August were short-staffed due to these staffing issues. Short-staffing at OUC has a direct effect on the agency’s ability to retain and recruit new staff, especially as existing staff face increased, long-term overtime demands. What’s more, increased demands on staff may contribute to reported dispatch errors and affect the agency’s ability to meet national standards for call answer and dispatch times.

Similarly, in March, the District’s Department of Corrections (“DOC”) reported nearly 20% (172 of 866) of all correctional officer positions as vacant. Correctional officers are largely responsible for day-to-day operations at the DC Jail, not only supervising residents but often directly administering programs and other services to residents. As such, these vacancies have had a direct effect on day-to-day DOC operations: due to staffing shortfalls, DOC has increased overtime and expanded responsibilities for existing staff, increasing burn-out among our correctional officers; without sufficient staff to administer programming, critical reentry and resident enrichment programming has reduced or canceled, impacting the ability of residents to successfully transition from the DC Jail at the end of their sentence; and, word of mouth about the heightened demands on staff due to staffing issues has, per reports to the Committee, had a direct effect on interest in applying for available correctional officer positions

As seen in just these two examples, long-term, heightened vacancies at District agencies can have drastic effect on those agencies’ ability to execute on the agency’s mission, provide services, and, most critically, safeguard the health and safety of our residents. It is critical that the District take

immediate action to develop and implement strategies to comprehensively address staffing shortfalls across agencies. Of course, there is no panacea or simple solution to staffing shortfalls as the needs of each agency and position are different. Thus, any solutions must be precisely tailored to address the unique needs of that agency and the particular workforce and market being targeted.

With those concerns in mind, the “Government Recruitment and Retention Act of 2023” aims to address issues with hiring and recruitment across District agencies, with a particular focus on vacancies among mission-critical positions in our public safety agencies. Specifically, the legislation would:

- Establish a new Director of Recruitment and Retention within the Office of the City Administrator, tasked with identifying mission-critical positions in District agencies that are either difficult-to-fill or with high attrition rates, identify the factors causing those positions to be difficult-to-fill or suffer from high attrition (both District-specific and nation-wide factors), transmit an annual report to the Mayor and Council with specific recommendations to address identified issues, and, on an ad hoc basis, directly assist agencies in implementing those recommendations—both from the annual report and otherwise—and other strategies to address hiring and retention issues.
- Authorize the Mayor, to directly aid agencies in hiring and retention for difficult-to-fill positions, to issue employee retention payments and new hire recruitment incentives of up to \$5,000 for the following positions impacting public safety:
 - Correctional officers within the Department of Corrections;
 - Call takers and call dispatchers within the Office of Unified Communications;
 - Staff within the Department of Behavioral Health Community Response Team;
 - Staff within the Child and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service;
 - Social workers, case managers, social services assistants, and social services representatives within the Department of Human Services;
 - Medical examiners within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner;
 - Direct care positions within the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services; and
 - Positions identified by the new Director of Recruitment and Retention that will further our efforts to improve public safety.
- Require that the Mayor, on a quarterly basis, transmit a report to the Council on vacancies among the difficult-to-fill positions listed above, including data on staff hired, staff departed, the number and dollar value of recruitment incentives and retention payments provided, and total spend on recruitment incentives and retention payments year to date.
- Direct MPD to engage a contractor to develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high-school age students to enroll in the cadet corps program.

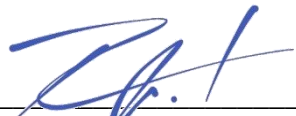
- Direct the Department of Corrections to engage a contractor to develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high-school age students to pursue a career with the Department of Corrections.
- Direct the Office of Unified Communications to engage a contractor to develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high-school age students to pursue a career as an OUC call taker or call dispatcher.
- Establish an internship program within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to encourage high-school age students to work at OCME, and in pursue a career as a medical examiner.


Should you have any questions about this legislation, please contact my Committee Director, Michael Porcello, at mporcello@dccouncil.gov.

Thank you,

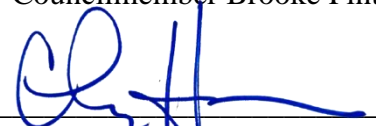
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "BE Pinto", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brooke Pinto

1
2 
3 Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.


Councilmember Brooke Pinto

4
5 
6 Councilmember Vincent C. Gray


Councilmember Christina Henderson


Councilmember Charles Allen

7
8
9
10
11
12
13 A BILL
14
15
16

17 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
18
19

20 To establish recruitment incentives and retention payments for certain difficult-to-fill positions,
21 to require that they Mayor transmit a quarterly report to the Council on hiring and
22 retention rates and the number and value incentive and retention payments provided, to
23 establish a new Director of Recruitment and Retention within the Office of the City
24 Administration, to authorize the Metropolitan Police Department to contract with an
25 entity to execute a campaign to encourage high-school age students to enroll in the cadet
26 corps program, to authorize the Department of Corrections to contract with an entity to
27 execute a campaign to encourage high school-age students to pursue a career as a
28 correctional officer, and to direct the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to stand up an
29 internship program for high school-age students.

30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
31 act may be cited as the “Government Recruitment and Retention Act of 2023”.

32 Sec. 2. (a)(1) For new employees hired after January 1, 2024, to eligible positions, the
33 Mayor shall provide a recruitment incentive of up to \$5,000.

34 (2) For existing employees in eligible positions, the Mayor may provide a
35 retention payment of up to \$5,000.

36 (b) Each quarter, the Mayor shall transmit to the Council a report on recruitment and

37 retention of difficult-to-fill positions. The report shall include, for the preceding quarter, for
38 eligible positions:

39 (1) Broken down by position type:

40 (A) The number of staff hired;

41 (B) The number of staff departing, including, where known, the reason for
42 the departure;

43 (C) The number and total dollar amount of recruitment incentives
44 provided; and

45 (D) The number and total dollar amount of retention payments provided;
46 and

47 (2) Total spend on recruitment incentives and retention payments, and remaining
48 available budget for recruitment incentives and retention payments.

49 (c) For the purposes of this section, “eligible positions” means:

50 (A) Correctional officers within the Department of Corrections;

51 (B) Call takers and call dispatchers within the Office of Unified
52 Communications;

53 (C) Staff within the Department of Behavioral Health Community
54 Response Team;

55 (D) Staff within the Child and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service;

56 (E) Social workers, case managers, social services assistants, and social
57 services representatives within the Department of Human Services;

58 (F) Medical examiners within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner;

59 (G) Direct care positions within the Department of Youth Rehabilitation

60 Services; and

61 (H) Positions identified by the Director of Recruitment and Retention
62 pursuant to section (b)(1) of this Act.

63 Sec. 3. (a) There is established, within the Office of the City Administrator, a Director of
64 Recruitment and Retention (“Director”).

65 (b) The Director shall:

66 (1) Identify mission-critical positions in District agencies that are difficult-to-fill
67 or have high attrition rates;

68 (2) Identify factors causing or contributing to these positions being difficult-to-fill
69 or suffering from high attrition, including issues of employee morale and enhanced mental health
70 support needs;

71 (3) On an annual basis, transmit a report to the Mayor and Council that includes
72 the following:

73 (A) A list of positions identified used paragraph (1) of this subsection,
74 including an explanation of data and standards used by the Director to identify these positions;

75 (B) A description of the factors, whether local or nationwide, causing or
76 contributing to these positions being difficult-to-fill or suffering from high attrition;

77 (C) Recommendations on incentives, interventions, and other changes to
78 agency law, policies, or practices to enhance recruitment and retention for those positions; and

79 (4) Work directly with agency leadership and staff to implement
80 recommendations proposed in the annual report required under paragraph (3) of this subsection,
81 or as otherwise necessary to address recruitment and retention issues within District agencies;

82 Sec. 4. For School Year 2024-2025 and subsequent school years:

83 (1) The Metropolitan Police Department (“MPD”) shall engage a District-based entity to
84 develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high school-age students to enroll in
85 MPD’s cadet corps program;

86 (2) The Department of Corrections (“DOC”) shall engage a District-based entity to
87 develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high school-age students to pursue a
88 career as DOC correctional officers; and

89 (3) The Office of Unified Communications (“OUC”) shall engage a District-based entity
90 to develop and execute a campaign to encourage District high school-age students to pursue a
91 career as OUC call takers and call dispatchers; and

92 (4) The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (“OCME”) shall stand up an internship
93 program to encourage high school-age students to pursue a career with OCME.

94 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

95 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the Budget Director as the fiscal impact
96 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
97 October 16, 2006 (12 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

98 Sec. 6. Effective date

99 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
100 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
101 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
102 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
103 Columbia Register.