



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004**

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Health
The Judiciary & Public Safety

October 11, 2023

Nyasha Smith, Secretary
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Smith:

Today, I am introducing the ***“Shirley Chisholm Elementary School Redesignation Act of 2023”***. Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation.

John Tyler Elementary School, located on Capitol Hill in Ward 6, has as its namesake John Tyler, the tenth president of the United States. A proponent of slavery and racist policies, and an enslaver himself, John Tyler actively sought to expand slavery into the new territories, voted for Virginia to secede from the Union, and was later elected to the Confederacy House of Representatives. His perpetuation of slavery and later betrayal to the Confederacy makes him an inappropriate namesake for the school and does not reflect the diversity of the school community or its values.

In 2020, the school community began the renaming process with this context in mind. The school PTA circulated three surveys in 2021, 2022, and 2023 to collect ideas for new names from students and families. A PTA subcommittee reviewed 121 nominated names and evaluated them based on seven criteria. After an extensive ranked-choice voting process in June 2023, which included former staff, families, community members, students, and caregivers, the community approved “Shirley Chisholm Elementary School”.

Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman to be elected to the United States Congress and later became the first Black candidate who ran for her party’s nomination for President. She was known throughout her career for being a resolute supporter of civil rights and women’s rights and fiercely fought to end economic, social, and political injustices. In Congress, she introduced more than 50 pieces of legislation and championed racial and gender equality, the plight of the poor, and ending the Vietnam War. I agree with the community that Shirley Chisholm is an exceptional role model and better represents the inclusive and anti-racist values of the school

community. I would note that Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B, in which the school is located, also supports the name change.

Please feel free to reach out to me or my Legislative Director, Antonio Nunes, with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chairperson, Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Vice Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



Councilmember Charles Allen

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To designate the school in Lot 841 in Square 974, bounded by G Street, S.E., 11th Street, S.E., I Street, S.E., and 10th Street, S.E. in Ward 6, as Shirley Chisholm Elementary School.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Shirley Chisholm Elementary School Redesignation Act of 2023”.

Sec. 2. Pursuant to section 401 and 422(b) through (e) of the Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code § 9-202.01 and 9-204.22(b) through (e)) (“Act”), and notwithstanding section 422(a) of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 9-204.22(a)), the Council designates the school in Lot 841 in Square 974, bounded by G Street, S.E., 11th Street, S.E., I Street, S.E., and 10th Street, S.E. in Ward 6, as “Shirley Chisholm Elementary School”.

Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

Sec. 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as

34 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
35 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
36 Columbia Register.