

# WE DESERVE TO BE SAFE FROM CRIME AND FROM ABUSE OF POWER

Bill 25-345, "Secure DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2024"

Allowing officers to escape accountability, to harass people, and to collect DNA on arrest will not make D.C. safer. These types of provisions are not "public safety" solutions; they are measures that open the door for abuse of power. True public safety requires increasing police accountability and trust and protecting due process.

## The Problem: Abuse of Power is Unacceptable

### Police Harassment:

- **Anti-Mask Provision:** Allowing police to stop people in masks and face-coverings simply because an officer suspects bad behavior would enable police harassment, not prevent crime. This provision is especially troubling now, at a time when people regularly wear masks to protect themselves from COVID-19 and other illnesses. Because of bias, this provision would disproportionately impact the District's Black residents.
- **"Drug-Free" Zones:** Failed and ineffective "drug-free" zones do not prevent crime; instead, they allow police officers to harass people and violate our rights. The District can't make standing around a crime. Ordering a person who has committed no crime to disperse, and then arresting them if they do not, makes mere loitering a crime, which is unconstitutional.

### Inappropriate Police Power:

- **Harmful Changes to Body-Worn Cameras:** Allowing officers to view body worn camera footage before they write their initial reports can lead to biased reports. This change would roll back police accountability and spread distrust of police. The D.C. Police Reform Commission even recommended permanently prohibiting officers from reviewing their BWC recordings before writing initial reports.<sup>1</sup>
- **DNA Collection on Arrest:** This provision was rightfully removed from the Secure DC Act,<sup>2</sup> and it should stay out. Collecting DNA on arrest violates our privacy and our presumption of innocence. A person's DNA inherently contains the most sensitive, personal information about them, and being arrested is not the same as being guilty. Our system of justice relies on due process, and this provision does the opposite – it treats certain people as guilty until proven innocent.
- **Sentencing Commission Power:** Giving the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) a vote on the sentencing commission would erode the separation of powers that provides critical checks and balances to our justice system.

**THE SOLUTION: TELL D.C. COUNCILMEMBERS TO REJECT HARMFUL PROVISIONS IN THE SECURE DC ACT THAT PUT BOTH OUR SAFETY AND OUR RIGHTS AT RISK.**

**TAKE ACTION**  
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