

# **COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Statement of  
**Drew Ronneberg**  
Commissioner 6A02

In Opposition to Council Approval of

## **Billboard Blight Removal Approval Resolution of 2009 PR 18-665**

Thursday, February 18, 2010

My name is Drew Ronneberg. I am the commissioner of ANC 6A02 and serve as the Chair of ANC 6A's Economic Development and Zoning Committee. Unfortunately, because of the short notice for this hearing, the full commission did not have time to weigh in on this matter. However, four ANC 6A commissioners have signed a joint letter strongly urging the Council to disapprove the Billboard Blight Removal Approval Resolution.

The proposed mayoral resolution has numerous problems. It would rescind DCRA's proposed regulations to remove antiquated billboards, lift the current cap on number of permitted "special signs" and allow new "special signs" to be located anywhere in the District, included the portion of H Street NE located in our ANC.

Special signs are a much larger visual blight than billboards because, while grandfathered billboards are limited to 300 square feet, special signs can cover the entire side of multistory building. One only needs to look at the huge nine-story special sign at 5<sup>th</sup> and Massachusetts NW to appreciate the visual assault that these signs pose. The City's skyline should reflect its unique role as the nation's capitol rather than being littered with commercial advertisements for fast food, action movies and muscle cars.

We are also concerned that under the pending mayoral resolution, permits for new "special signs" will not expire, nor be limited to areas in downtown Washington DC. H Street NE, a portion which is located in my SMD, is finally beginning to reawaken after years of disinvestment. I would be disappointed to see H Street revitalized by small, unique, and locally owned businesses under the shadow of huge "special signs" advertising the products of large, multinational corporations.

DC deserves better than this bill. It adds to the bottom line of billboard companies while visually littering the District's streetscapes. I and 3 other ANC 6A commissioners strongly urge the City Council to disapprove the "Billboard Blight Removal Approval Resolution" and instead take up DCRA's December 2, 2009 proposed regulations.