

***Friends of the DC Archives***  
**Budget Hearing: Office of the Secretary of the District/DC Archives**  
**Committee on Government Operations,**  
**Councilmember Brandon Todd, Chair**  
**Friday, April 5, 2019**

Good day, Chairman Todd and members of the Government Operations Committee. I am Bill Rice. I represent the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA), a group of professional archivists and concerned citizens interested in the preservation and management of the DC Government's contemporary records and historic archives. We advocate for: a) a new, state-of-the-art Archives; b) significantly more staff and upgraded facilities for the current Archives; and c) comprehensive records management for the DC Government.

FDCA joins in supporting the Bowser Administration's commitment to a modern, state-of-the-art District Archives by moving the Archives to a new facility at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). Mayor Bowser has dubbed this a "win-win" for both institutions. UDC President Mason mentioned this in his budget testimony, and we ask the Council to fund this important step.

Regarding the Office of Secretary's FY20 budget, we offer the following comments and requests:

**\*District Historical Records Advisory Board Funding.** The FY20 budget does not appear to fund the District Historical Records Advisory Board (DHRAB), created by the Council at Councilmember Todd's behest. The legislation requires \$200,000 to begin the DHRAB's operations. Most importantly, this appropriation would fund DHRAB's study of *all* of the District Government's archives and record management programs. The DHRAB's work is essential as the Archives prepares to move into its new facility.

**\*Office of Public Records Funding.** With only six staff members, the Office of Public Records is grossly understaffed. It should be planning the move to the new archives. Instead, its staff is stretched so thin that it is forced to use volunteers to carry out its basic functions. We ask the committee, at a minimum, to double OPR's funding and staff. This would be a down payment on bringing OPR up to par with similar state archives.

**\*Archives Capital Budget.** The new Archives facility project is in the capital budget (AM0-AB102-ARCHIVES) for \$65.4 million, \$7 million less than last

year. We ask the Committee to query the Administration on the budgetary and planning status of the project and the proposed reduction.

We understand that construction of the new Archives at the site of UDC Building 41 depends on the UDC purchasing 4250 Connecticut Avenue. We support the funding for UDC's purchase. UDC could then move its Building 41 staff to 4250 Connecticut. That would free Building 41's site for the Archives.

In closing, we want to report on the very productive meeting we had with Senior Advisor Beverly Perry and Secretary Kim Bassett. Among topics we discussed, FDCA stressed involving the Office of the Chief Technology Officer in planning for the new Archives. We are pleased to expand our involvement with these and other key stakeholders in planning for the new facility and revitalizing DC's archives and records management programs.

We welcome your questions.

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