



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

January 23, 2025

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

For the reasons below, I am returning Bill 25-827, the "Pets in Housing Amendment Act of 2024," unsigned.

This legislation creates perverse incentives by limiting the amount a property owner may charge in security deposits and monthly fees for pets occupying housing units. The limits on security deposits and fees fail to recognize the significant operational and repair costs that pet occupancy imposes, such as the costs that landlords must incur to prepare a pet-occupied unit for the next owner. In many cases, the property owners will ultimately need to spread the extra costs of property management and maintenance associated with pet occupancy through higher rents for all.

In addition, as the Department of Human Services ("DHS") director testified at the hearing on Bill 25-827, there are a number of concerns with the bill's requirement that DHS operate a low-barrier shelter that allows pets: (1) DHS's qualitative and quantitative data does not support the need; (2) the mandate would come with a considerable cost at a time when our homeless service system is cost-constrained; (3) the requirement would be extremely challenging to implement under DHS's current shelter operations framework; and (4) while addressing a need of people with pets, the requirement would introduce new health and safety challenges at shelters. These concerns, unfortunately, were not addressed in the version of the bill adopted by the Council.

For these reasons, I am returning Bill 25-827 unsigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Muriel Bowser", written over a horizontal line.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor