



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

July 22, 2026

The Honorable Bill Lee
Governor, State of Tennessee
State Capitol, 1st Floor
600 Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

We write as elected officials representing the District of Columbia to respectfully request that you withdraw all troops currently deployed to the District by September 1, 2026.

The National Guard's mission includes protecting our nation and assisting communities in times of disaster. Temporary, event-specific assistance for a major national event, such as the America 250 celebrations or the Freedom Grand Prix, is fundamentally different from open-ended military patrols in District neighborhoods. There are approximately 5,148 Guard personnel currently deployed to the District under the premise that an extraordinary military presence was necessary to address public safety.¹ Yet analysis of the deployment has found only a modest decrease in property crime and no measurable reduction in violent crime attributable to the Guard's presence since August 2025.²

The deployment has, however, cost American taxpayers more than \$3 million per day, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.³ Continuing this deployment despite the absence of a demonstrated violent-crime benefit would misuse both taxpayer dollars—in the billions, if maintained for years at its expanded scale—and the service of the Guard members themselves. At a time when families in Tennessee and across the country are struggling with the cost of groceries, housing, health care, and other necessities, wasting those resources on an ineffective, indefinite deployment that neither District residents nor officials asked for is disrespectful to American taxpayers.

¹ District of Columbia National Guard Joint Task Force Update. July 8, 2026. [District of Columbia National Guard > Domestic Operations > Joint Task Force \(JTF\) - District of Columbia \(DC\)](#)

² Battistin, E., Hahn, R., Perez-Davila, S., & Sun, B. (2026, May 28). "Washington DC's Crime Decline and Its Lessons for American Policing." Niskanen Center. [Washington, D.C.'s crime decline and its lessons for American policing - Niskanen Center](#)

³ Congressional Budget Office. (2026, January 28) [Estimating the Costs of Troop Deployments to U.S. Cities | Congressional Budget Office.](#)

It is also unfair to the Guard members being asked to leave their families, civilian careers, and communities for a mission without a clear objective, measurable public-safety outcome, or firm end date. Extending the deployment raises serious concerns about mission creep, the militarization of civilian spaces, the erosion of local democratic control, and potential interference in the peaceful transfer of power following upcoming elections.

D.C. residents pay federal taxes, serve in the military, and host our nation's democratic institutions, yet are denied full voting representation in Congress and full control over our own local affairs. As a state governor, we hope you can imagine the injustice of facing outside military forces indefinitely occupying our communities without statehood-level accountability and local control. In addition, the continued presence of military personnel in the nation's capital through future election periods also risks normalizing the use of armed forces in and around spaces where residents vote, organize, protest, and participate in civic life. Whatever their stated mission, Guard personnel should not become a standing feature of the political and electoral landscape of the District.

We recognize that the America 250 events present significant public safety and logistical challenges for the District and have required coordination across multiple jurisdictions. We are grateful to the Guard members who have been present to support the nation's capital during this exceptionally busy period. Once the principal event-related needs conclude on September 1, 2026, we respectfully ask that they be permitted to return home to their families, careers and communities, rather than remain indefinitely assigned to a costly mission that has not demonstrated a measurable impact on violent crime.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.



Councilmember Brooke Pinto



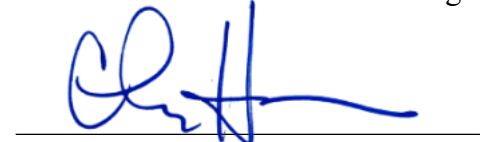
Chairman Phil Mendelson



Councilmember Janeese Lewis George



Councilmember Charles Allen



Councilmember Christina Henderson



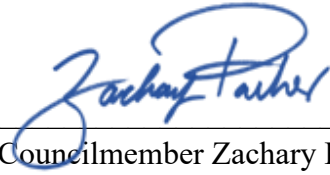
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau



Councilmember Wendell Felder



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Zachary Parker



Councilmember Elissa Silverman



Councilmember Matthew Frumin



Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.