

Dominique Moore
Committee of the Judiciary and Public Safety
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

Hello, Councilmember Pinto and DC Council staff. My name is Dominique Moore. I serve as a PAVE Ward 4 PLE board member.

I have been living in Washington DC since 2002. I have personally experienced the devastating impact of inadequate security measures and lack of support for our youth. In 1994, my father, who was a yellow taxi cab driver, was tragically murdered by two young men in southeast DC. This experience has shown me how important it is to have proper security measures, programs, and transportation options in place in our city.

As a parent, I face limitations in transportation options for my own child, who is on the autism spectrum. And I will be honest there are no suitable modes of transportation available for him to attend regular or after-school programs. That means I am his sole means of transportation in a city with a supposedly robust transportation system, and it is disheartening. I am grateful to Mayor Bowser and her staff for allotting \$9.7 million to maintain the Safe Passage program, the \$6.5 million increase in funding for the special education transportation program, and the one-time allotment of \$7.2 million to maintain the DC School Connect program. These are all great investments in transportation options for students and I hope that they continue to be funded and expanded over the years.

Today, I have two asks today that I and other PAVE parents believe will make a huge difference in the safety of our children. First, the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice should work with MPD, WMATA PD, safe passage program leaders and workers, and all PCSB and DCPS school leaders to organize a yearly, citywide convening to build relationships and discuss ways they can collaborate around safe passage. The funding for DC School Connect, safe passage, and the special education transportation programs alone are not enough to help all DC kids get to and from school safely. There must be other systems in place that help coordinate all these moving pieces so that kids in public charters and in DCPS can have a safe commute.

Additionally, the individuals who interact with our children on platforms, trains, along their school routes, and more like Safe Passage Workers must know how to correctly engage with



youth, especially youth with disabilities. Deputy Mayor Appiah and her office should work with DC youth and SPW to create robust training for SPW to become familiar with de-escalation techniques, restorative practices, responding to students with disabilities, and youth development. We are facing a crisis and it is unfair to expect children to navigate these crime and violence challenges on their own. The paths they walk are shaped by the environment we create for them, and currently, all they see is violence and disrespect. They deserve better and our city deserves better. As a proud resident of DC and a mother of a neurodivergent child, I am asking for the assistance of Deputy Mayor Appiah and the Safe Passage Workers to help make our city better. We need to change the direction and address the disparities that are unfolding before our very eyes. It is time to invest in creating a safer and more supportive environment for our youth, our communities, and ourselves.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the solutions you develop and am available for questions.

Sincerely,

Dominique Moore, Citywide and Ward 4 PLE Board Member, PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)