

Statement of
Bernice Hutchinson, Executive Director
Dupont Circle Village
before the
D.C. City Council, Committee on Finance and Revenue
Hearing on Age-in-Place and Equitable Senior Citizen Real Property Act of 2011
January 9, 2007

Good morning. My name is Bernice Hutchinson and I am Executive Director of the Dupont Circle Village, a 501 (c)(3) membership organization that promotes aging in place. I am here to urge the Council to move swiftly to pass Bill 19-512 into law.

The *Age-in-Place and Equitable Senior Citizen Real Property Act of 2011*, Bill 19-512, raises the cap on senior household incomes that qualify for D.C.'s real property tax credit, allowing for 1500 additional seniors to take advantage of this credit. We feel that the increase in the cap represents an important commitment to keeping older Washingtonians who choose residency in the District of Columbia a part of the city's landscape.

Bill 19-512 compliments the work of Villages. Dupont Circle Village is one of more than 200 Villages nationwide and more than 40 here in the metropolitan area that provide social and supportive networks through health and wellness activities, social and cultural engagement, and considerable volunteer support. As municipal, state, and federal governments look to trim budgets, Villages represent a vibrant alternative to providing needed services that older residents find increasingly necessary. The tax credit should not be evaluated solely on its cost burden to the city, rather, working in partnership with Villages, the city should begin to address the complex cost benefit analysis of aging in place and how Villages offset expenses for aging city residents. U.S. Census projections now through 2030 show a steady decline in the 60+ population here in the District, while other surrounding jurisdictions and most states project

steady gains. The question today is whether the District supports aging in place and is prepared to ensure that older homeowners remain.

Bill 19-512 demonstrates a commitment to creating laws that ensure diversity in community and household composition. For many raising the cap will make the difference between remaining in or leaving the city, supporting the intergenerational composition within our neighborhoods and communities. Today's older adult households depend on multiple income sources of retired spouses, older adult siblings, and younger caregivers. This bill recognizes the growing trend of extended families and the presence of caregivers who assist older adults, keeping them in their homes.

Bill 19-512 opens the door for discussion about future measures needed to promote safe, affordable, and quality aging in place for older Washingtonians. Now is the time to assure older residents that budget cuts will not destabilize their homeownership in DC. Rather, this is the time for the Council to start a bold, new dialogue to demonstrate a real commitment to maintaining older homeowners as a valued part of the District's demographic make-up. Thank you.