



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
ROOM 400
WASHINGTON, DC 20004**



**Press Release
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To Ward 7 Residents:

I wanted to take this opportunity to speak about my philosophy regarding the best Ward in the city, Ward 7; and comment on some of the spending of my constituent services fund that has not been reported.

Ward 7 is a ward of 70,000 people and my motto is "Making Ward 7 One." Ward 7 is comprised of residents that represent every aspect of the socioeconomic ladder. It also has 29 distinct communities, almost as many civic associations as well as very active advisory neighborhood commissions. From the very beginning, it has been clear to me that the best way to serve my 70,000 residents was to support and empower the powerful network of organizations already established in the ward so that they can help me reach and support the community as a whole. I have supported them by ensuring easy access to government services and continuing to make sure that all of the leadership in the ward had as much information as possible about what is happening not only within the civic associations or ANC, but throughout the ward, hence, "Making Ward 7 One."

The starting point for this effort was to maintain a Constituent Services office in Ward 7. Let me be clear, free constituent office space is available in D.C. Government owned buildings. Unfortunately, there were no D.C. Government owned buildings in Ward 7 and so the best choice I had was to rent space in the ward to make city services accessible for residents. I am mindful of how expensive it can be for Ward 7 residents to travel downtown to the John A. Wilson building and that is why I chose to provide an office in the neighborhood that was easily accessible and convenient for Ward 7 constituents.

Office space is expensive and includes leases, telephones, fax machines, copy machines, computers, internet access and more. It also requires maintenance of these electronics. These expenses are not covered by the government; therefore, the constituent services funds were used to cover the costs since these services are in place to aid the residents of Ward 7. Over the last three years, the cost of rent, maintenance and upkeep of the constituent services office has amounted to approximately \$60,000. With the amount spent, my office has been able to serve over 4,000 Ward 7 residents who have sought out assistance by coming to the office.

While serving as the Ward 7 council member, I have committed to maintaining the tradition of hosting a State of the Ward event where I provide an annual comprehensive overview of the

ward. At this event, I provide recognition plaques to outstanding members of the community and I cater a dinner for the approximately 250 people that attend this event knowing that it occurs during most people's dinner time. Over the years I have provided over 100 plaques to groups including all ANC's, Civic Association Presidents and non-profit leaders. Over the last three years, the total costs for this annual event has amounted to approximately \$9,000. The cost of plaques and the catered dinner can be expensive but I believe it is extremely important to recognize those who commit their time and energy for our community.

Every year, I have committed to honor the top student of every graduating class of all 32 schools in Ward 7. I believe that it is important to recognize excellence among our students and to encourage them to continue on the right path as they pursue their education further. Over the last three years, approximately \$4,500 has been spent on plaques to honor these students and to show that I, along with the residents of Ward 7, are proud of them and support them in their achievement.

Civic associations, organizations and individuals are certainly the backbone of every ward and I have made it a priority to support them to the best of my ability. Along with attending all civic association meetings, I have sponsored or purchased tables at fundraising events that were hosted by the civic associations as well as bought advertisement space in program books and sponsored festivals. Many of these events were geared towards raising funds to help members of the community that are in need. In addition to sponsoring these events, bereavement contributions, rental and utility assistance were provided directly to Ward 7 residents in need. Over the last three years this has totaled to more than \$14,000.

I have continued the tradition of having leadership council meetings where I invite all ANCs, Civic Association Presidents, and other community leaders to discuss important topics pertaining to Ward 7. Since I have been in office I have hosted more than 20 of these meetings on Saturday mornings while providing breakfast. The best available time to have this meeting and to not intrude on other scheduled civic meetings is Saturday morning. Out of respect for asking people to come out for a 9 a.m. meeting during the weekend, we cater a breakfast that is approximately \$500 per event or \$10,000 overall.

Therefore, approximately \$98,000 over the last three years has gone directly to Ward 7 residents. In addition, the resources that residents have been able to access as a result of having an office in the ward reach well over \$250,000. I am also pleased that the constituent services funds are used to support Ward 7 residents such as the landlord for the Ward 7 office, the caterer for the events and the owner of the company that designs the honorary plaques for outstanding Ward 7 residents. There are more expenditures that go to Ward 7, including expenditures out of my own pocket, but I wanted to demonstrate that the money raised for Ward 7 constituents goes completely to Ward 7. I was born and raised in Ward 7, I love Ward 7, I pump gas at the number 7 pump at Ward 7 gas stations and I fight for Ward 7 everyday.

I am proud of the way I am able to support the ward with my Constituent Services Fund. March 30, 2011 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. is my next State of the Ward event and it will be held at the Department of Employment Services building – a new D.C. Government owned building located in Downtown Ward 7 at the intersection of Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road. This building

will also house my new, and free, Constituent Services office. Continuing my theme of “Making Ward 7 One,” I encourage you all to come out on March 30 for this tremendous event. Dinner will be served.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Yvette M. Alexander
Councilmember – Ward 7