

**Statement on behalf of the  
American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia  
before the  
D.C. Council Committee on Youth Affairs  
Public Roundtable Re:  
Youth-Centered Alternatives to Teen Takeovers: Recreation, Opportunity,  
and Accountability  
By  
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April 30, 2026**

Chair Parker and members of the Committee, thank you for holding this important roundtable on a very critical and timely matter. The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia (ACLU-D.C.).

ACLU-D.C. advocates for sensible, evidence-based public policy solutions that safeguard fundamental liberties and rights of District residents. ACLU-D.C. also believes that a safer D.C. is one where individuals, families, and communities have the resources to meet their needs. Young people in D.C. deserve policies that consider their wellbeing, that truly address the challenges they and their communities are facing, and that de-center policing and carceral-centric strategies. D.C.'s Black youth, in particular, deserve to not only be heard, but be protected like anybody else; not further criminalized in the place they call home.

ACLU-D.C. submits our report, "[Building Safety Through Resources](#)", released last November, for the roundtable record.<sup>1</sup> The report aggregates social science and neuroscientific research and pairs it with an analysis of effective programs in D.C. and around the country that take a preventive and holistic approach to public safety. It also highlights programs and initiatives that have been proven more effective and promising than policing in youth crime prevention strategies.

We all know that the safest and most resilient communities are the ones with resources, not more police. This is backed by research and decades of observing failed "tough-on-crime" policies that have caused Black and poor communities more harm than good. ACLU-D.C. hopes that this roundtable is not just another formality. We

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<sup>1</sup> ACLU-D.C. Report. <https://www.acludc.org/app/uploads/2025/10/2025-ACLU-D.C.-Report-Building-Safety-Through-Resources.pdf>.

hope that it is truly an opportunity to hear and listen to the experiences of the District's most marginalized youth, and that the policy decisions which follow are informed by those experiences.