

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 8B



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BROKEN PROMISES, BROKEN HOMES: WHEN WILL D.C. STOP THE SLUMLORDS**

**Washington, D.C.** – The District is in crisis. Families are being pushed to the brink by slumlords who exploit legal loopholes, dodge enforcement, and subject hardworking residents to unlivable conditions. This is not just a housing crisis—it is a humanitarian catastrophe. And yet, the people with the power to stop it refuse to act.

Across the city, families are living in homes with no heat in the winter, no air conditioning in the summer, collapsing ceilings, black mold creeping through the walls, faulty wiring, rodents, pest infestations, and plumbing disasters. This is not an exception—it is the daily reality for far too many tenants. And the people responsible? Slumlords who do not even live in D.C., who see our neighborhoods as nothing more than an investment portfolio while refusing to make the most basic repairs.

This is not just negligence; it is willful and reckless endangerment. It is a calculated decision to ignore health and safety laws for profit. And it is happening under the watch of Mayor Muriel Bowser and the D.C. Council, who have failed to take the decisive action necessary to end this crisis.

As an elected official, business owner, and father raising two children in Southeast D.C., I have had enough. Time and time again, this city moves mountains to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on stadiums and developers, yet there is never the same urgency when it comes to protecting residents from predatory landlords. Slumlords continue to operate with impunity while D.C. officials offer empty promises and half-measures. That is unacceptable.

D.C. tenants should not have to beg for basic human dignity. They should not have to fight tooth and nail for repairs that should have been made months or years ago. They should not be forced out of their homes while slumlords continue to rake in millions, hiding behind LLCs to escape accountability. The stories are endless—landlords refusing to fix dangerous conditions, intimidating and retaliating against tenants who speak out, abusing legal loopholes to evict families, and manipulating the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) to strip residents of their rights.

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The Attorney General Brian Schwab, has made efforts to hold the worst offenders accountable, but it is nowhere near enough. The system is designed to protect slumlords, not tenants. The fines are laughable. The penalties are weak. The enforcement is slow. And landlords know how to drag out cases for years while continuing their abusive practices. Families are being displaced, communities are being shattered, and the people responsible are walking away wealthier than ever.

This crisis will not end until slumlords face real consequences. The District must impose criminal penalties on landlords who repeatedly violate housing laws. Repeat offenders should be banned from owning or managing rental properties in any capacity. The shell companies and LLCs that allow these bad actors to evade responsibility must be shut down. The Department of Buildings and other regulatory agencies need real resources, real authority, and real urgency to enforce the law. The cycle of abuse will not stop until the city stops letting landlords play legal games while tenants suffer.

For too long, D.C. leaders have tiptoed around this issue, offering lip service while families are forced onto the streets. This crisis is not new. Year after year, slumlords buy properties, neglect them, abuse legal loopholes, and force tenants out. And year after year, the D.C. government allows it to continue.

Enough is enough. The Mayor and the D.C. Council must take a stand—not for slumlords, but for the residents who call this city home. Any policy that expands landlords’ ability to evict tenants or weakens protections like TOPA is a betrayal of the people of this city. D.C. must send a clear message: slumlords will be punished, not protected.

If our leaders refuse to act, the consequences will be devastating. More families will be forced into homelessness. More communities will be destabilized. More slumlords will profit off of suffering. And the people responsible for this inaction will be held accountable—not just by history, but by the very residents they have abandoned.

Washington, D.C. belongs to its residents—not to slumlords, not to negligent landlords hiding behind LLCs, and certainly not to a government that refuses to enforce its own laws. It is time to act to force the slumlords out of business and out of our city. Will we protect our residents, or will we continue to let corruption, greed, and neglect dictate the future of our city.

### END ###