



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee On The Removal and Disposition of Abandoned
And Other Unlawfully Parked Vehicles
Reform Amendment Act of 2021
October 26, 2021**

Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase). Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the Committee's hearing on the Removal and Disposition of Abandoned and other Unlawfully Parked Vehicles Reform Amendment Act of 2021 (B24-302). I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its October 25, 2021 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

The Commission strongly supports the District's efforts to remove abandoned and other unlawfully parked vehicles from our streets. Several cars within our ANC have been parked in the same public space for months or years. Commissioners and residents have filed numerous 311 requests for removal of these conspicuously abandoned

vehicles, but the Department of Public Works (DPW) reports that it cannot act because only one of the criteria in D.C. Official Code § 50-2421.02(1) has been met. As a result, these cars continue to occupy scarce on-street parking spaces and are an eyesore for the community. DPW needs greater latitude to cite and remove these cars.

One example illustrates the ineffectiveness of the current statute. On March 25, 2021, I submitted a 311 request to DPW for two vehicles that had been parked for months on the street in front of 5521 29th Street, NW.¹ The registration on one car expired on December 28, 2019, and the car appeared to be inoperable (Request No. 21-00103760). The registration on the second car expired on December 4, 2016, and it was also apparently inoperable (Request No. 21-00103762). The DPW inspector contacted me on March 26, 2021, and said that these vehicles were not “abandoned” under the statute because they met only one of the statutory requirements. He also said that DPW was not enforcing expired registrations during the pandemic, and the 311 requests were closed. I refiled 311 requests on July 13, 2021 (Request No. 21-00274848), after the moratorium on expired registrations was lifted, but again, the request was closed because these vehicles met only one of the criteria for abandoned vehicles. A constituent has also requested over the past six months that these vehicles be removed as abandoned but has also been told that they do not meet the statutory definition of “abandoned.”

¹ Photos of the cars are attached. The first four photos are from March 2021, and the last two photos are from October 2021, when the car with expired registration from December 4, 2016, is covered with a tarp. Note the flat tire in the last photo.

There are multiple examples in our ANC of similar vehicles that have been parked on our streets for months or even years with long-expired registrations, but DPW tells us that they are powerless because the statute requires at least two indicia of abandonment. Some of the criteria in D.C. Code § 50-2421.02(1) could be subject to interpretation — e.g., whether the vehicle is “extensively damaged” or “apparently inoperable” — but an expired registration is completely objective. Our public streets should not become perpetual parking lots for vehicles that cannot be legally operated.

We agree that subparagraph (D) should also be changed to require that the vehicle’s tags and registration have lapsed for a period of time before it is deemed abandoned. *Any* lapse of the registration is subject to fines under D.C. Code § 50-1501.04(c)(1),² and those penalties should be rigorously enforced. Nevertheless, we urge the Committee to consider whether the period for triggering the abandonment provisions should be shortened to six months to ensure that these unlawful vehicles are promptly removed from public streets.

Thank you.

² The statute provides for a fine of \$200 for a lapse in registration between one and 30 days and a fine of \$200 for each additional unregistered month or portion thereof, up to a maximum of \$2,400 for a 12-month lapse.











