

GET Committee

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To: GET Committee
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Subject: Confirmation of County directors GET-1 (2) (6) (8) (9)

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Confirmation of County directors
Submitted by Thomas Croly

I have been watching all of the testimony and meetings held in the Governance, Ethics and Transparency Committee over the past week. I applaud the committee for their careful public vetting of each of the Mayor's director appointees. This is an important process to ensure that each of the directors appointed by the Mayor possess the qualifications set forth in the County charter and code, and to demonstrate in a public setting that they have been appointed based on these qualifications and not any type of nepotism or cronyism.

I have been concerned that many testifiers, and some statements made by Council members, seem to imply that what is being conducted in this committee is an interview process, and that it is up to the Council to choose the best candidate for the job. The Mayor has the sole power to select the director appointees. The Council's role in this process is to approve or disapprove, but if disapproving, the Council should have reasons firmly based on failure to meet qualifications, incompetency, malfeasance or conflict of interest. It is not relevant that the Council "like" the appointee or agree with that persons politics. The Council's role is to provide transparency in this process. If disapproval is the will of the body, the basis of this disapproval should be clearly established and discussed in committee.

Some testifiers have spoken out in favor and a few against the appointees and while professional and personal references are helpful, this process is not a popularity contest. Some testifiers have spoken about specific decisions that these appointees may have made that the testifier disagreed with. Indeed there have been many decisions, made by several of the appointees, that I personally have disagreed with. But I have not seen any testimony that would establish any reason to disapprove any of the Mayor's appointees. The difficult decisions that these directors make are the reason we have strict qualification requirements for the directors to meet.

I appreciate the thoughtful questions the Council members have asked the directors about how they intend to deal with the many challenging issues facing them. This helps the public understand the Director's plan and in some case why some policies are established by the directors.

Finally, I would urge the Council to reserve use their power of disapproval to the rare incidence where true malfeasance or lack of qualifications have been clearly established or revealed. This confirmation should not be a political process, (as it is in Washington DC) but rather an exercise in sunshine to allow the public to have confidence that the County departments and agencies are being lead by qualified directors.

With all this in mind, including the research and experiences that I have had with each of the appointees, I support the full Council's approval of all of the Mayor's appointees.