



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

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Health
The Judiciary & Public Safety

February 3, 2025

Nyasha Howard
Secretary to the Council
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Howard:

Today, alongside Councilmembers Brianne K. Nadeau, Zachary Parker, Brooke Pinto, and Robert C. White, Jr., I am introducing the ***“Department of Parks and Recreation Field Priority Access Amendment Act of 2025”***. Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation.

The District has one of the most active and robust youth recreational sporting communities in the country. With it comes the ever-increasing challenge of field space and scheduling. Both the Department of Parks and Recreation (“DPR”) and District of Columbia Public Schools (“DCPS”) have field space that are in high demand when available, and often in competition with different age groups as well as more selective, competitive teams across a wide range of sports.

One need only spend a few hours on a warm weeknight or weekend at The Fields at RFK to understand the immense and impressive demand for those fields and to see the challenge confronting the District. Multiple teams will divide up a single soccer field to ensure every kid gets some exercise and learn more about being part of a team, but that ends up being a substandard experience for the children. As a result, many sports leagues lose District families who opt to go to Maryland or Virginia, where field space is not an issue and there are fewer cancelled games or lost opportunities to reschedule following a rainout.

This bill is aimed at protecting and growing the youth sports leagues that serve all kids across the District. First, the bill grants priority access during peak youth sports times for both practice and games on DPR fields. Second, it creates a rubric in which DCPS school fields are made available without creating an undue burden on school staff or putting at risk the use of those fields for school teams and school events. Third, it puts in place protections to ensure these leagues are responsible for maintaining the safety and quality of the fields and leaving them in as good shape as they are

found. Currently, DCPS fields are rarely made available to sports leagues without paying a significant fee to use them on the weekends.

For sports leagues seeking access to either a DPR or DCPS field, priority access would be granted to leagues that undergo the process of becoming a certified community-based youth sports organization with DPR. To qualify, a sports league would need to guarantee it does not restrict participation based on ability and that there is a process for ensuring low-income residents can play. The organization would need to meet several administrative requirements to ensure compliance with DCPS schools' needs and re-certify regularly. Ensuring the cleanliness and security of the fields would be a key part of retaining the permit.

Granting these community-based organizations priority access to DPR and DCPS outdoor sports fields is a straightforward and impactful way to invest in their futures and provide opportunities to keep them engaged. It also recognizes in a dense city like ours, there is only so much room to build more fields, and we should look to get the most out the fields the District already maintains.

Please feel free to reach out to me or my Legislative Director, Antonio Nunes, with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chairperson, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

1 Brianne K. Nadeau

2 Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

Charles Allen

Councilmember Charles Allen

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4 Zachary Parker

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6 Councilmember Zachary Parker

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Councilmember Brooke Pinto

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8 R.C. White, Jr.

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10 Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

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12 A BILL

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17 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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22 To amend An Act To vest in the Commissioners of the District of Columbia control of street
23 parking in said District to require the Department of Parks and Recreation to establish a
24 program with the District of Columbia Public Schools for use of DCPS outdoor fields by
25 certified, community-based youth sports organizations; to amend the Division of Park
26 Services Act of 1988 to require the Department of Parks and Recreation to create a new
27 permit program for outdoor field use by certified community-based youth sports
28 organizations in the District and lay out the requirements for the program; to amend the
29 Ensuring Community Access to Recreational Spaces Act of 2018 to reorder the priority
30 level of permitted uses for recreational spaces and make conforming changes; and to amend
31 Section 717.2 of Title 19 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations to make
32 conforming changes.

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34 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
35 act may be cited as the “Department of Parks and Recreation Field Priority Access Amendment
36 Act of 2025”.

37 Sec. 2. Section 6a of An Act To vest in the Commissioners of the District of Columbia
38 control of street parking in said District, effective July 1, 1898 (30 Stat. 570; D.C. Official Code §
39 10–137.01) is amended by adding a new subsection (d-1) to read as follows:

40 “(d-1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Director of the Department shall
41 establish a program in partnership with the District of Columbia Public Schools (“DCPS”) to allow

42 for the use of DCPS outdoor athletic and recreational fields in every ward on evenings and
43 weekends, outside of the hours in which the fields are in active use by schools or the Department.”.

44 Sec. 3. The Division of Park Services Act of 1988, effective March 16, 1988 (D.C. Law 7-
45 209; D.C. Official Code § 10-166 *et seq.*) is amended by adding a new section 2b to read as follows:

46 “Sec. 2b. Certified community-based youth sports organizations.

47 “(a) The Department of Parks and Recreation (“Department”) shall establish a Certified
48 Community-Based Youth Sports Organization program for the issuance of outdoor field permits,
49 which shall be determined and certified by the Department.

50 “(b) A certified community-based youth sports organization seeking a permit under this
51 program shall:

52 “(1) Be a District-registered non-profit organization that is tax exempt under 26
53 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3), (4), or (6);

54 “(2) Serve at least 100% of youth under the age of 19, 75% of which are District
55 residents;

56 “(3) Not restrict participation based on ability;

57 “(4) Have a documented process to waive organization fees and uniform costs for
58 low-income families;

59 “(5) Have at least 75% of its leadership team, board of directors, or similar
60 governing body maintain a primary residence within the District; and

61 “(6) Have and maintain accident and general liability insurance.

62 “(c) Certified community-based youth sports organizations shall receive the same priority
63 when rescheduling following a weather-related cancellation as they would be allowed during the
64 initial permit application.

65 “(d) The Department shall make available to certified community-based youth sports
66 organizations any necessary lighting and be responsible for the operation of field lighting as
67 necessary at District parks and recreational fields and DCPS athletic and recreational fields during
68 the following windows each week during a season at the same rate for non-profit entities:

69 “(1) For District parks and recreational fields, Monday through Friday from 4:00
70 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., or for a DCPS school during afterschool programs Monday through Friday from
71 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; and

72 “(2) Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

73 “(e)(1) DCPS may provide access to bathroom or locker room facilities or security services.

74 “(2) Certified community-based youth sports organizations shall:

75 “(A) Be responsible for the cleanup and disposal of all trash or debris related
76 to their activities; and

77 “(B) Leave the athletic and recreational field secured as requested by the
78 Department or DCPS.

79 “(3) DCPS shall not pass on associated costs for staffing, custodial, or security
80 services to certified community-based youth sports organizations.

81 “(f) DCPS may cancel any permitted activity with 30 days’ notice to the community-based
82 youth sports organization that conflicts with a DCPS activity on or at the outdoor athletic and
83 recreational field.

84 “(g) The Department may suspend or revoke the certification of a community-based youth
85 sports organization if:

86 “(1) More than 25% of the permits accepted are not used in a given sports season,
87 excluding postponements due to weather or unforeseen circumstances outside of the control of the
88 certified community-based youth sports organization;

89 “(2) Any permit is transferred to or used by any other entity without the written
90 consent of the Department;

91 “(3) For a DCPS school permit, any violation of specific agreements relating to
92 cleanup, trash disposal, and securing the field after use; or

93 “(4) The certified community-based youth sports organization fails to remain in
94 good standing with the Department or meet other requirements that may be set by the Department,
95 DCPS, or other District agencies.

96 “(h) The Department shall require a certified community-based youth sports organization
97 to re-apply for certification annually.”.

98 Sec. 4. Section 3 of the Ensuring Community Access to Recreational Spaces Act of 2018,
99 effective February 22, 2019 (D.C. Law 22-210; D.C. Official Code § 38-431 *et seq.*), is amended
100 as follows:

101 (a) Subsection (a) is amended to read as follows:

102 “(a) School facilities shall be used according to the following order of priority:

103 “(1) Use of the school facility by the public school where the school facility is
104 located;

105 “(2) Use of the school facility by DCPS;

106 “(3) Community use at times designated by the Mayor; and

107 “(4) Use of the school facility by permit holders, including permits issued by the
108 Department of Parks and Recreation.

109 (b) Subsection (b)(2) is amended by adding a new subparagraph (B-i) to read as follows:

110 “(B-i) Certified community-based youth sports organizations;”.

111 (c) Subsection (c) is amended by striking the phrase “school facility” and inserting the
112 phrase “school facility, except that custodial or security fees shall not be charged for the use of a
113 field” in its place.

114 Sec. 5. Section 717.2 of Title 19 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations is
115 amended to read as follows:

116 “If more than one (1) applicant is seeking a permit for the same permitted use or equipment
117 at the same time, the Department shall establish the following priority:

118 (a) Department-sponsored activities;

119 (b) Athletic programs organized by DCPS, District public charter schools, or the
120 DCSAA for competitive league play and not for intramurals;

121 (c) Certified community-based youth sports organizations as recognized by the
122 Department and youth non-profit organizations, including schools, principally serving District
123 residents;

124 (d) Non-profit partners such as Programmatic Partners, Park Partners, and
125 Collaborative Partners or designated organizations recognized by the Department in a written
126 agreement;

127 (e) Adult non-profit organizations principally serving District residents;

128 (f) Other organizations, groups, or individuals for private use that are based in the
129 District; and then

130 (g) Others.”.

131 Sec. 6. Fiscal impact statement.

132 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact
133 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
134 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

135 Sec. 7. Effective date.

136 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
137 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
138 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,
139 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
140 Columbia Register.