

Testimony to: DGS Oversight Hearing

From: Johanna F. Polsenberg, Ph.D., MBA

Re: Remodernization budget for DC Public Schools

I am submitting my testimony as both a parent of a two elementary-aged DC public school students who attend Capitol Hill Montessori @ Logan and as a small business property owner of three residential rental properties here in DC.

Why is the fact that we own rental properties relevant? Because, in order to be licensed to rent, we have to go through a rigorous licensing and inspection process, and, simply put, the building in which my children and more than 300 other DC public school children aged 3 through 13 go to school would not even come close to passing a housing inspection.

Can any of you here on this committee think of one reason why those standards should be different? And, I'm not saying the standards by which our schools are allowed to operate are a little bit different from the operating standards we are held to as property owners. They are vastly different.

Attached to this testimony is the Inspection Report for obtaining a Basic Business License through the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to rent One- and Two-Family Dwellings in the District of Columbia. There are 17 "Condition of Unit" items on that inspection report; four of them pertain only to sleeping quarter requirements and occupancy. Of the remaining 13 items that could arguably be said to be common sense health and safety items regardless of whether it's a home or a school, the school building for Capitol Hill Montessori @ Logan, where DC public school students spend between 6.5 hours (school day for primary students) and as many as 11 hours (full day including before and after care) a day, would outright fail at least seven of the items.

In other words, my husband and I, small business people in this city, are held to a higher standard than the Office of the State Superintendent for Education for protecting the health and well-being of DC residents.

Clearly, I'm not arguing for a reduction in the standards for housing. Sure, we grumble when we have to get inspections, but we do them, and we fix the identified problems. We operate our properties with integrity, and we take responsibility. Can you say that you do the same?

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
**Inspections and Compliance Administration**

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Basic Business License

### Post Licensure Inspection Report

### One and Two Family Dwellings

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT #: \_\_\_\_\_

BBL CAP No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Is property occupied?  YES  NO

NOV CAP No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Condition of Unit**

	PASS	FAIL
A. <u>Are there HARDWIRED smoke detectors in THE VICINITY OF SLEEPING AREAS (14 DCMR §904.4; DC Official Code §6-751)</u>		
B. Does unit meet space requirements for occupancy? (2006 IPMC §404.2; §404.4; §404.6)		
C. <u>Does ceiling height meet minimum requirements in all habitable spaces (2006 IPMC §404.3)</u>		
D. Does unit meet light and ventilation requirements? (2006 IPMC §402; §403)		
E. <u>Are all exit doors readily openable without the need for keys, special knowledge or effort? (2006 IPMC §702.3) [1 DAY]</u>		
F. Are sleeping rooms free from gas meters and fuel burning appliances? (14 DCMR §402.4)		
G. <u>Do all sleeping rooms have adequate emergency escape and rescue openings? (IPMC §702.4)</u>		
H. Are walls, ceilings, doors and windows free of peeling paint, cracks and holes? (2006 IPMC §305.3)		
I. Are windows & doors (including hardware) in good repair & weather tight? (2006 IPMC §304.13; §304.15)		
J. Are floors, steps and walking surfaces sound and reasonably level? (2006 IPMC §304.10; §305.4)		
K. Are electrical outlets, switches and fixtures in good repair and working properly? (2006 IPMC §605.1)		
L. Are the required number of electrical receptacles and light fixtures present? (2006 IPMC §605.2; §605.3)		
M. Does dwelling unit contain the required plumbing fixtures in good repair? (2006 IPMC §502.1; §504.1)		
N. Is the heating system operational and in good repair? (2006 IPMC §602.2)		
O. Is the water heating equipment operational and in good repair? (2006 IPMC §505.1)		
P. Are all appliances installed properly and maintained in safe and good working condition? (14 DCMR §400.5)		
Q. Is fire extinguisher placed properly in the condominium building? (12H DCMR §F906.1)		

**2. Required Certifications**

	N/A	PASS	FAIL
A. Water Heating Facilities (inspect between March 1—September 1) (2+ Dwellings) (12G DCMR §PM-505.5)			
B. Central Heating System (inspect between March 1—September 1) (2+ Dwellings) (14 DCMR §501.10)			
C. Air Conditioning—if present (inspect between September 1 and May1) (1+ Dwellings) (14 DCMR §510.2)			

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Today your property:**

**Passed Inspection.**

**Failed Inspection.** Correct the failed items and call (202)442-9557 to schedule a follow-up inspection.

**NOTE: Failed items are subject to the issuance of a notice of violation and a \$90 re-inspection fee. Failure to pay the re-inspection fee may result in a lien being placed on the property and other administrative and civil penalties.**

Failure to meet all requirements within **forty-five (45) days** from the date of license issuance may result in your Basic Business License being revoked, loss of paid fees and additional administrative and civil penalties.

Violations of the code that are not listed on this checklist are subject to the issuance of a notice of violation.

Inspection report received by:

Owner / Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner / Agent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The landlord / operator is required to be aware of Lead Based Paint notification requirements. Go to [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) & [www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead) for more information.*