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**Testimony of Jen Jenkins  
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Legal Aid DC**

**Before the Committee on Business and Economic Development  
Council of the District of Columbia**

**Performance Oversight Hearing Regarding Chief Financial Officer**

**February 5, 2025**

Legal Aid DC<sup>1</sup> submits this testimony to urge the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and this Committee to grow the District's budget through progressive and equitable taxation.

The Chief Financial Officer should recommend and implement policies and revenue raisers that will not further harm low-income residents, increasing their ability to achieve financial stability. DC's wealthiest residents and businesses are better able to absorb targeted tax increases. It would be life changing, however, if the revenue generated by higher taxes was invested in programs that supported and uplifted low income DC residents.

The District should invest dollars from equitable taxation into programs that benefit low-income residents and, in turn, all of DC. As members of both the Just Recovery DC Coalition and the Fair Budget Coalition,<sup>2</sup> Legal Aid DC recommends that the CFO

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<sup>1</sup> Legal Aid DC is the oldest and largest general civil legal services program in the District of Columbia. The largest part of our work is comprised of individual representation in housing, domestic violence/family, public benefits, and consumer law. We also work on immigration law matters and help individuals with the collateral consequences of their involvement with the criminal legal system. From the experiences of our clients, we identify opportunities for court and law reform, public policy advocacy, and systemic litigation. For more information, visit [www.LegalAidDC.org](http://www.LegalAidDC.org).

<sup>2</sup> See Just Recovery DC, The People's Tax Plan, <https://justrecoverydc.org/our-platform>; Fair Budget Coalition, <https://fairbudget.org/>.

consider and implement both platforms' recommendations with specific attention to raising income tax, taxing capital gains, property tax increases, and a business activity.

### **Conclusion**

In the face of austere budgets proposed by the Mayor, the CFO should make a sound decision to recommend increasing the District's budget through progressive and targeted taxes in order to fund programs and initiatives that support DC's vulnerable and low-income residents. Implementing progressive tax programs will allow Washingtonians to contribute their fair share and, in turn, create a more equitable DC.