

**Testimony of
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Georgetown Emergency Response Medical Service
before the
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission...good evening. I am grateful for the opportunity to be with you here tonight to discuss Georgetown's proposed ten-year campus plan and the impact it will have on the students who live, study, and contribute to the University and surrounding community.

I sit before you tonight as a representative of the Georgetown Emergency Response Medical Service, commonly known as "GERMS." I am a senior in the College, and one week from this Saturday, I will become a proud alumnus of the University. Over the last four years, I have spent over 2200 hours volunteering as an EMT with GERMS, including responding to 522 emergency calls since January 2008 and serving as the Director of Training during the 2009-2010 school year. On April 1st of this year, I finished my term as President. I would like to take the remainder of my time tonight to give you an inside look at an entirely student-run organization that has thrived on Georgetown's campus since 1982.

GERMS was founded almost 30 years ago by a group of undergraduate students who felt that there was a need for faster emergency medical response on campus. In fact, our own President DeGioia was a member of GERMS when it first began. This is a fact we rarely let him forget! With an annual budget of just \$8,000, GERMS went in service and has continued to provide the campus, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods and the District of Columbia as a whole, with rapid response, treatment, and transport free of charge for all patients. Since its founding, GERMS has responded to approximately 25,000 emergency calls and has seen its budget grow from \$8,000 to its current budget of \$60,000. Each year, approximately than

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100 of our patients are members of the community (in other words, residents of the nearby communities of Burleith, Georgetown, Cloisters and Foxhall benefit from the services provided by GERMS), and these calls account for roughly 12 percent of our annual call volume. We are able to provide all of our services for free because of the passionate involvement of our entirely volunteer membership and the generosity of the University and its alumni. In fact, this February, we placed into service the ninth ambulance in the history of GERMS, at a cost of over \$130,000. We operate a fleet of two basic life support ambulances certified by the DC Department of Health as well as one mass casualty response unit, which was equipped with the help and consultation of DC Fire & EMS's special operations branch. This unit is now able to be deployed to augment the already comprehensive response provided by the Fire & EMS department in the event of a disaster anywhere in the District. In addition, each year, we train over 60 individuals as EMT-Basics, not all of whom are Georgetown students. In the past 3 years alone, we have trained community members from the Department of Defense, National Park Service, U.S. Secret Service, as well as ordinary citizens who are looking to become more prepared for any medical emergency. Our training center boasts a 96 percent pass rate on the National Registry of EMTs' cognitive examination, a rate that is almost 20 percent higher than the national average. We continue to receive accolades from the DC Department of Health for producing such high-caliber EMTs on an extremely limited budget.

GERMS has been able to foster and maintain a strong relationship with the District of Columbia, including the Fire & EMS department, the Department of Health, and the DC Medical Reserve Corps. We have sent medical personnel to the last 3 Presidential Inaugurations, and plan to do so in the years and decades to come. We also provide medical personnel and ambulance support during major events in the city, including the Marine Corps Marathon held each fall. We are currently working with Medstar Health and the Fire & EMS Department to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that would effectively add our units to the list of

available EMS units dispatched by the Office of Unified Communications when citizens call 9-1-1. This would provide residents of Georgetown and the surrounding neighborhoods with the fastest possible response time and provide the city with two more ambulances that can be used to respond to 9-1-1 calls. Additionally, during major crises, GERMS is able to provide aid when requested by the city. For example, on September 11th, 2001, GERMS was on standby to serve the greater District of Columbia as DC Fire and EMS units were being diverted to the Pentagon at the request of the Arlington County. In the fall of 2005, GERMS provided more than 240 hours of standby medical coverage at the DC Armory for Hurricane Katrina evacuees from the Gulf Coast. We are ready to assist the city whenever necessary.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission, I would like to say that this was admittedly an abbreviated description of GERMS, both the history and the overview of operations. Should you wish to learn more about our organization, I have included a link to our website in the testimony submitted for the record. However, GERMS is just one of hundreds of student-run groups that make Georgetown University a truly amazing place. The campus plan presented to you is, at its most basic level, an attempt to enrich the lives of all members of the community. Many of the recommendations suggested by the Office of Planning would penalize the many for the actions of a few. While no one is suggesting that all Georgetown students are perfect individuals, the vast majority of us are engaged in work that seeks to better everyone around us, regardless of affiliation with the University. I ask you to remember us when discussing the future of our campus.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

GERMS Website: www.GeorgetownEMS.com