

**Testimony in Support of the
Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning's Proposal
Case Number: 04-33
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Hearing from Public Witnesses**

Good evening, my name is Roberta Hantgan. I live at 1741 Johnson Avenue, NW in Ward 2. I'm here wearing three hats tonight.

First, as a citizen of the District of Columbia I know that I am one of the fortunate ones. I bought an apartment many years ago with a friend and because of that initial investment, I am now able to own my own condominium. Yes, I'm lucky to have made the decision to enter the market when I did, but I look around at many of my Ward 2 neighbors who are renting in Section 8 housing, or who are homeless, or who work for non-profit organizations, or who teach or police – and I know that ownership in my city is not an option for them today. I feel this is unjust.

I also work for the National Education Association. We represent over 2.7 million public school educators nationwide. I know that many of our constituents are not paid enough to live in the communities where they teach. Besides the negative impact on the teacher, this is a tragedy for the communities they serve because when a child sees a teacher living in their neighborhood, they know that the teacher is truly invested in them and their community. The parents know it too.

Finally, I'm a member of a faith organization – Jews United for Justice. We work in coalition with other grassroots organizations who believe that justice and equity and equal opportunity are traits that should be embodied in the laws that govern this city.

I have five points I'd like to make tonight:

(1) The bottom line is that we need affordable units. We need to ensure that our city's IZ policy is one that helps these units to be built rather than helping developers opt out of building them.

(2) Our policy should also serve as many low income families as is feasible. By low income, I'm referring to those households that make less than 50% of AMI. The Office of Planning proposal does not serve this constituency in high rise developments.

(over)

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(3) We need a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy that models the successes of other jurisdictions – and we know that a unit set-aside approach is the one that's used in most jurisdictions. Based on collective national experience, this approach also seems easier to evaluate, monitor, and enforce once a development is built.

(4) We need a consistent policy that clearly lays out the inclusionary zoning requirements and gives less – rather than more - discretion to the developers in defining the terms of those requirements and that causes developers to build more and not fewer affordable units.

(5) My final point is this – and I say this as a resident, as a teacher representative, and as a person of faith: Our Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning amendment proposes a valuable tool to generate more affordable housing, especially in neighborhoods where we might never otherwise see it. It's one important step toward creating affordable housing in DC, and it's a sound and tested policy.

To those folks who have stated that mandatory inclusionary zoning will only produce 3,000 to 5,000 affordable units over the next ten years, I say – these are units that will not be built without this program. And these units represent working families, and they represent hope. And they mean that our city does not simply reserve housing opportunity for the wealthy. I would be proud to sit here 10 years from now knowing that there are 5,000 more families contributing to and enjoying the fruits of our city.

Thank you.

Submitted by:
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