Newsroom (/news)

March 27, 2026, 3:15 pm

Ward 4 Dispatch: DC 2050, Tax Resources, and Fighting High Utility Bills



This Week's Highlights

Dear Neighbors,

Happy Friday! This week, I want to make sure neighbors are aware of an important opportunity to share feedback on DC's comprehensive plan. I also have updates on our work to stand up for residents facing rising utility bills, progress on my bill supporting DC youth employment, and much more.

Council News/Legislative Updates

Taking Action on Rising Utility Bills

Over the past few months, many DC residents have opened their utility bills to find shocking increases—in some cases doubling or rising by hundreds of dollars. On March 5th, the DC Court of Appeals vacated the most recent Pepco rate increases, raising serious questions about the legality of rates residents are currently being charged. But until DC's Public Service Commission and regulators act, residents are still being charged elevated rates, facing the threat of utility shutoffs.

On Thursday, I introduced emergency legislation to temporarily pause electricity shutoffs as regulators review the legality of Pepco's increases. This pause will give regulators the time needed to determine a fair and lawful path forward, without putting families at risk. **Residents should not lose power while there is active legal and regulatory uncertainty about what they should be paying in the first place.**

Progress on DC Young Adult Corps Act

Earlier this year, I was proud to introduce the **DC Young Adult Corps Act of 2026 (https://janeeseward4.com/introducing-legislation-creating-paid-service-pathways-for-young-adults/)**—legislation designed to create a new workforce pipeline for young adults, addressing key community needs while empowering program participants. Today, the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor held a hearing on the bill, marking a step forward for this important legislation. As a reminder, here's what the bill does:

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 26-RE
EXHIBIT NO. 12T

- Provides young adults who've graduated from high school or obtained a GED within the past 12 months with paid service opportunities that build professional, educational, and civic skills
- Strengthens the District's workforce pipeline through service placements aligned with community needs
- Supports District agencies, nonprofits, and schools in advancing local priorities while developing the next generation of civic leaders

Thank you to everyone who testified at today's hearing. I'm looking forward to seeing this bill move forward to support young people across the District!

Congress Passes "Safe and Beautiful Act"

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed the **Make DC Safe and Beautiful Act (https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5103)**, codifying many of the draconian measures that have been pushed by the Trump administration over the past year—including stepping up immigration enforcement and maintaining federal law enforcement presence across the District. The bill also creates a federal "Safe and Beautiful" commission, charged with encouraging immigration enforcement, reviewing DC's criminal justice policies, and facilitating federal deployments across the city. This week, I joined my colleagues in **sending a message (https://bsky.app/profile/cmlewisgeorgew4.bsky.social/post/3mhwcf6dvt22o)** to congressional leaders to oppose this bill. We must be clear: this federal overreach will make DC less safe, and our community deserves better.

Community News

DC 2050 Comprehensive Plan: Share Your Feedback

Last week, the DC Office of Planning released an updated **Future Land Use Map (https://dc2050.dc.gov/pages/draft-future-land-use-map)** as part of the DC 2050 Comprehensive Plan—a long-term framework that will help guide how and where the District grows in the coming decades. As we continue to assess this plan and what it means for Ward 4, I encourage you to **review the map (https://dc2050.dc.gov/pages/draft-future-land-use-map)** and share your feedback with the Office of Planning at **DC2050@dc.gov (mailto:DC2050@dc.gov)**. Community input is a critical part of this process, and your voice can help ensure the final plan better reflects our shared priorities. As always, I'll keep the community updated as the process moves forward and more opportunities arise to weigh in.

Protecting Bike Lanes on 15th Street

Late last week, we learned of National Park Service plans to start removing the protected bike lane that runs along 15th Street between Constitution Ave, south to the Tidal Basin. Removing this lane would not alleviate congestion—it would cause more of it as accidents increase. It is not just Ward 4 and DC residents who will be affected—every member of Congress has constituents who have enjoyed touring the National Mall from the safety of these bike lanes. On Friday, I reached out to NPS to urge the agency to reverse this dangerous decision. You can **read my full letter here (https://x.com/CMLewisGeorgeW4/status/2035157207533203829)**.

Community Resources

Chairman Mendelson's Tax Town Hall and Other Tax Resources

Tax season is underway, and if you have questions about property tax assessments, the appeals process, or other DC tax questions, make sure to attend Chairman Mendelson's Tax Town Hall on Saturday, March 28th from 10am to 12pm at UDC Student Center (4200 Connecticut Ave, NW, Room A01). And as a reminder, income-eligible seniors can still get **help filing their taxes from AARP (https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp-taxaide/locations/?msockid=10d85d84a9ab6a8801cd4b5ea8e56bfd)** at the following locations until April 15th:

- Emery Heights Community Center (5701 Georgia Ave, NW)
- Lamond-Riggs/Lillian J. Huff Library (5401 South Dakota Ave, NE)
- Armed Forces Retirement Home (3700 North Capitol St, NW)
- Chevy Chase Community Center (5601 Connecticut Ave, NW)



Share Feedback on Metro Bus Service Improvements

Right now, WMATA is considering additional Metro Bus service improvements in the District, which are meant to make bus service more frequent and reliable. Before these proposed improvements are finalized by the WMATA Board this spring, Metro is seeking feedback from the public on the proposed service improvements. Neighbors can share their feedback through a survey on **wmata.com/budget (https://wmata.com/initiatives/budget/)** until Monday, April 6th at 5pm.

OPC Utility Social Services Discussion

On Tuesday, March 31st from 10am to 12pm, the Office of the People's Counsel is holding its 2026 Utility Social Services Discussion. This session is designed specifically for social service providers, community partners, and advocates to help DC residents maintain access to vital utility services. Attendees will be able to ask questions, share concerns, and stay informed about current utility billing practices and available assistance programs. **Register here (https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/hap6xn4)**.

Plymouth Congregational and New Hope Baptist UCC Food Pantry

On Saturday, March 28th from 10am to noon, Plymouth Congregational and New Hope Baptist United Church of Christ are joining to host a free food pantry for neighbors in need, taking place at 5301 North Capitol Street, NE.

Neighborhood Events

ANC 4B01 and 4B02 Neighborhood Clean-Up

Join neighbors in ANC 4B01 and 4B02 for a joint neighborhood clean-up on Saturday, March 28th, starting at 10am! Neighbors in 4B01 will meet at the corner of Blair Road and Fern Place, and neighbors in 4B02 will meet in front of Takoma Elementary School on Dahlia Street. Bags, gloves and trash pickers will be available. The event will conclude with a group photo and socializing and snacks in front of Takoma Elementary School. Questions? Reach out to ANC Commissioner Christian (**4b02@anc.dc.gov (mailto:4b02@anc.dc.gov)**) or State Board of Education Rep. Colson (**tmichelle.colson@dc.gov (mailto:tmichelle.colson@dc.gov)**).

Above the Influence Basketball Tournament

On Tuesday, April 14th at 12:30pm, my office is joining the Wards 3 and 4 Prevention Center and community partners to host a basketball tournament at Riggs LaSalle Recreation Center (501 Riggs Rd, NE). The event is free and open to all 9th-12th grade students. Registration is required, and space is limited. **Sign up today (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexealZiCyAeVnbm7GMDyZRV3vt8kONiSBoS-89uv7Q0STMsg/viewform)**!



Lafayette-Pointer Park Erosion Community Meeting

On Tuesday, April 7th from 6 to 7:30pm, the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of General Services (DGS) are hosting a community meeting at Lafayette-Pointer Rec Center (5900 33rd Street, NW) to discuss the future of stormwater management at Lafayette-Pointer Park. For more information and to RSVP, **visit DPR's website (https://lafayette.splashthat.com/)**.

9th and Illinois Ave Triangle Park Community Meeting

On Tuesday, April 14th at 6pm, the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will hold a community meeting on the 9th St and Illinois Ave triangle park project. The meeting will take place at 9th St and Illinois Ave, NW, and in the case of rain or cold weather, at Emery Heights Recreation Center (5701 Georgia Ave, NW). For more information and to RSVP, **click here (https://9illinois.splashthat.com/)**.

Petworth Porchfest Set for May 30th!

It's official: 2026 Petworth Porchfest is scheduled for Saturday, May 30th! There will be music on porches from 2 to 7pm and on the main stage from 5 to 8pm. The rain date will May 31st. As neighbors gear up to take part in the festivities and enjoy all our local artists and businesses have to offer, I encourage you to read this **article**

from Petworth News (https://www.petworthnews.org/blog/petworth-porchfest-2026) highlighting how neighbors can volunteer and take part in Porchfest. The article also highlights my **Porchfest Permitting Act (https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0501)**, which the Council recently enacted to make sure neighbors can host Porchfest events without unnecessary bureaucratic barriers. Can't wait to see you all at Porchfest!

Important Reminders

Office Hours in the Community

Ward 4 office hours are happening every Wednesday afternoon at Fort Stevens Rec Center from 12 to 1pm, followed by office hours at Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center from 1:30 to 2:30pm. Community members can stop by and speak one-on-one with a member of our team about DC government services or our work in the Ward 4 community.

Support for Federal Workers

As many in our community face unprecedented challenges, I'm grateful to everyone who is stepping up to support neighbors. The Office of the Mayor has rolled out **fedsupport.dc.gov (https://www.fedsupport.dc.gov/)**, sharing resources for federal workers who have been laid off or impacted by recent cuts. I also want to remind neighbors of resources on my website for **federal workers impacted by recent actions (https://janeeseward4.com/resources-for-employees-impacted-by-recent-federal-actions/)** and **neighbors facing the threat of immigration enforcement (https://janeeseward4.com/immigration-resources)**, compiled with the help of Councilmember Nadeau. **DC government (https://dchr.dc.gov/page/join-dc-government)** and the **DC Council (https://dccouncil.gov/jobs-solicitations/)** are also hiring for a range of positions, and I encourage community members to take a look at the open positions and share with a neighbor.

Ward 4 in the News

Next Stop...Riggs Park: Draft DC 2050 Future Land Use Map (https://nextstopriggspark.com/2026/03/20/draft-dc-2050-future-land-use-map/)

The 51st: The Trump administration is about to kill a popular D.C. bike lane (https://51st.news/trump-administration-removing-dc-bike-lane/)

Next Stop...Riggs Park: Fourth Saturdays: Plymouth Congregational Church Food Pantry (https://nextstopriggspark.com/2026/03/25/fourth-fridays-plymouth-congregational-food-pantry/)

PoPville: Wake Me, Shake Me (Coffee, Records, Bar) aiming to open in Petworth in about a month!! and The Greeks Den already Opened on Upshur! (https://www.popville.com/2026/03/wake-me-shake-me-coming-dc-petworth-the-greeks-opened-upshur/) (https://nextstopriggspark.com/2026/03/13/ward-4-ward-5-councilmember-fy2027-budget-request-letters/)

Ward 4 Dispatch: Protecting Childcare Access, Fighting Pepco Rate Increases, and New Playground at Sela PCS! (https://janeeseward4.com/ward-4-dispatch-protecting-childcare-access-fighting-pepco-rate-increases-and-new-playground-at-sela-pcs/)

These are news articles that mention Ward 4 or pertain to events in our community. Councilmember Lewis George does not write or endorse their content but shares them for community awareness.

Today, I was grateful to join students at Anacostia High School alongside Eric Carpenter-Grantham and his mom Linda to talk about **Eric's ID Act (https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0619)**, which I introduced a few weeks ago. Eric's courage and advocacy are helping build a DC where everyone—especially neighbors with non-apparent disabilities—can be seen, understood, and safe every day. Thank you to all the young people who showed up, asked questions, and reminded us what community action looks like.

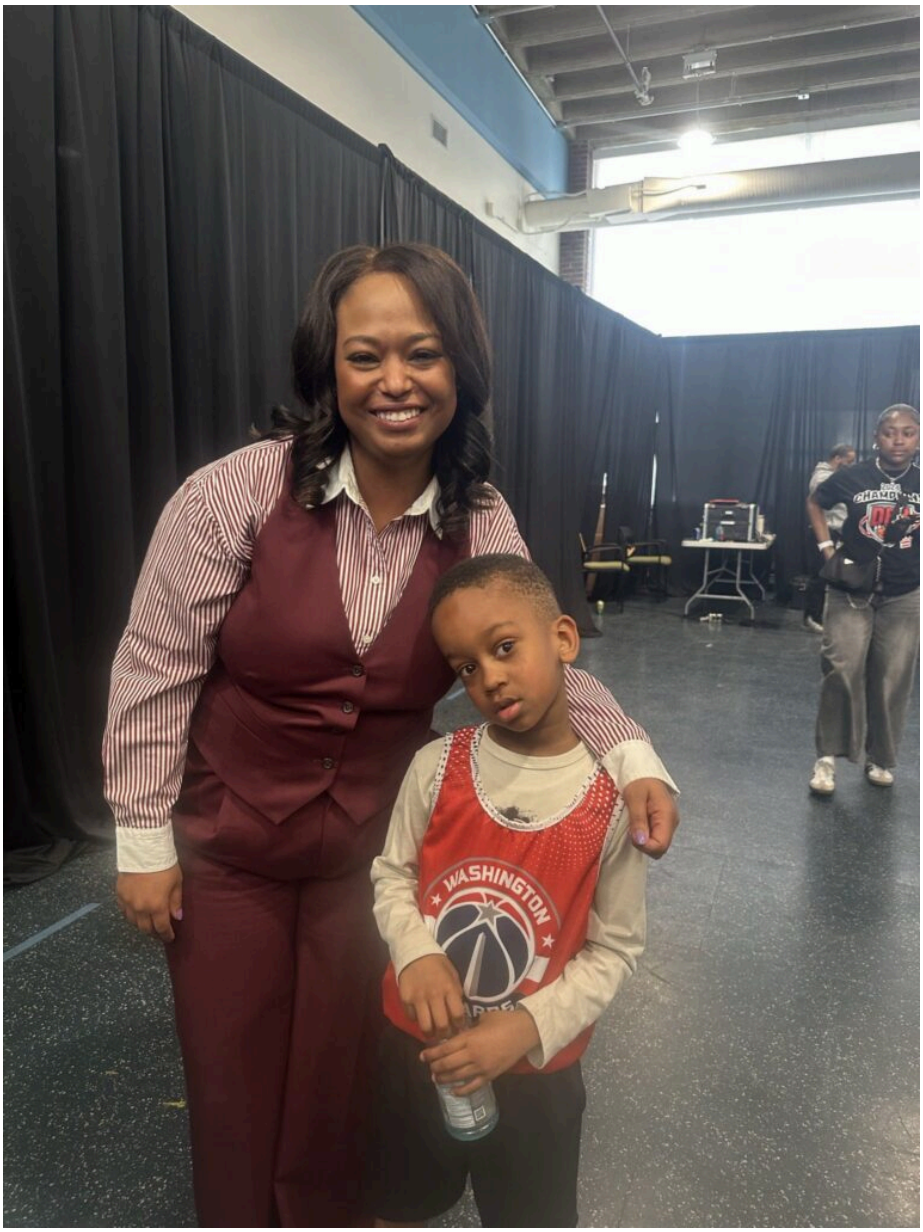
Another recent highlight in the community was getting to congratulate our Emery Heights scholar athletes, who represented Ward 4 so well at the DPR basketball championship. Their hard work, teamwork, and spirit made our whole community proud!

As a reminder, the Cherry Blossoms are now in full bloom, so make sure to **locate some of the trees near you (https://caseytrees.org/data-and-maps/cherry-blossom-map/)**and enjoy the spring colors!

Have a fantastic weekend, Ward 4!

Yours in Community,

—Janeese



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