

Josh Jacobson
Commissioner, ANC 1E06

Testimony for the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor
Friday, June 6, 2025

Chairperson Bonds and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for the record regarding the implementation and funding of Initiative 83.

My name is Josh Jacobson, and I serve as the elected Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for Single Member District 1E06 in Ward 1, representing Pleasant Plains.

Although I was unable to testify in person during the budget oversight hearing, I write to express my strong support for full funding and implementation of Initiative 83, which was overwhelmingly approved by District voters in November 2024.

Initiative 83 passed with 73% support District-wide, at least 68% in every Ward (with 79.6% support in Ward 1), and carried every precinct in the District. The measure brought two important reforms to our elections: ranked choice voting and open primaries for independent voters. These reforms are not only popular - they are necessary to make our elections more inclusive, representative, and democratic.

More than 75,000 D.C. voters are registered as independents, including many in my own community. There are many who self-identify with a party but work within our federal government and do not feel comfortable being registered as such. They contribute to the funding of our elections, yet under our current system, they are shut out of the most consequential races - our party primaries. Expanding access and giving voters more voice only strengthens our democracy. Ranked choice voting ensures majority support and empowers residents to vote their values without fear of wasting their vote, especially in ANC races that might have more than two candidates running.

The implementation cost of Initiative 83 (\$1.5 million over four years) is modest within the context of the District's budget. However, choosing not to fund it would send a troubling message about our commitment to Home Rule and democratic self-determination. Congress had the opportunity to overturn this law and chose not to. The Council should now do its part to uphold the will of D.C. voters.

I urge the Council to fully fund Initiative 83 in the FY2026 budget and move forward with implementing the electoral reforms D.C. residents have clearly demanded.

Respectfully submitted,
Josh Jacobson
Commissioner, ANC 1E06