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COUNCIL ADOPTS IMPORTANT PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

At the Council's Legislative Meeting today, Councilmember Phil Mendelson (D, At-Large) guided a number of bills – 9 in all – which benefit the safety and security of District residents.

Firefighters put their lives on the line every day to save lives and protect property in the District. Councilmember Mendelson was joined by the entire Council to extend the time the law currently allows for a burned firefighter to recuperate and return to duty. “This is an issue of fundamental fairness,” stated Mendelson. “We never want a firefighter to think about whether or not he or she will lose their job if they fight a fire with all they've got.” The **“Burned Firefighters Relief Emergency Act of 2008”** was adopted unanimously by the Council.

The provisions in the **“Emergency Medical Services Improvement Act of 2007”** were born out of the tragic death of David Rosenbaum. The legislation provides for a more medically-driven Emergency Management Services by establishing the position of the Medical Director in law, with statutory powers. This includes a provision that the Medical Director explicitly provides that the Medical Director may order emergency rooms to stay open and take patients, not park them in an ambulance in the hospital driveway. This legislation will help the District's EMS system become world-class. Medical care of trauma victims, stroke victims, heart attacks, etc. does not have to begin in the emergency room – and should not. The greater and sooner the treatment – i.e., the more that can be done in the field immediately – the greater the chances for not just survival but complete recovery. With a system more focused on medical care, these types of changes can be implemented. “It is unfortunate that it took a tragedy such as what happened to Mr. Rosenbaum to lead to a major reform of our EMS system, but a more medically-driven system, as outlined in this legislation, will go a long way in improving the delivery of care in the District of Columbia,” stated Councilmember Mendelson. The “Emergency Medical Services Improvement Act of 2007” passed the Council unanimously.

Other bills approved by the Council today that were reported out of the Judiciary Committee were: the “Bicycle Registration Reform Amendment Act of 2007,” the “Child Support Compliance Amendment Act of 2007,” the “Appointment of the Chief Medical Examiner Amendment Act of 2007,” the “Enhanced Professional Security Amendment Act of 2007,” the “Frank Harris, Jr. Justice Amendment Act of 2007,” the “Juvenile Speedy Trial Equity Temporary Act of 2007,” and the “Uniform Anatomical Gift Act Revision Act of 2007”.

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Currently serving in his third term as At-Large Councilmember, Phil Mendelson is also Chairman of the Council's Committee on Public Safety & the Judiciary. For more, visit <http://www.dccouncil.us/mendelson/index.htm>.