



The views expressed herein are presented on behalf of the following Communities of the D.C. Bar Communities: Antitrust and Consumer Law; Criminal Law and Individual Rights; D.C. Affairs; Early Career Lawyers; Family Law; Health Law; Labor and Employment Law; Law Practice Management; Litigation; Public Interest and Courts; and Real Estate, Housing and Land Use. These Communities are voluntary associations of individuals, most, but not necessarily all, of whom are members of the D.C. Bar. The D.C. Bar itself made no monetary contribution to fund the preparation or submission of this statement. Moreover, the views expressed herein have been neither approved nor endorsed by, and do not necessarily reflect the views of, the D.C. Bar, its Board of Governors, or all members of the D.C. Bar or the D.C. Bar Communities listed above.

Steering Committees of the D.C. Affairs and Public Interest and Courts Communities
of the D.C. Bar Communities

Public Statement Opposing Proposed Amendment to the D.C. Home Rule Act

The D.C. Attorney General's Unique Enforcement Role Must Be Protected

April 20, 2026

In the November 2, 2010, general election, voters approved Charter Amendment IV that made the office of D.C. Attorney General an elected position. That could change, however, if Congress passes a bill, introduced last September, vesting the authority to appoint D.C.'s Attorney General upon the U.S. president without requiring the appointment be confirmed by the Senate.¹
H.R.5179 - District of Columbia Attorney General Appointment Reform Act of 2025.

The proposed amendment to the D.C. Home Rule Act would put a federal employee, unaccountable to District residents, in charge of enforcing the District's laws, advising local government agencies, and upholding the public interest — potentially jeopardizing the D.C. Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) focus on local issues. OAG serves a unique, highly local, law enforcement role that greatly benefits District citizens. From worker and tenant rights to consumer issues and predatory practices, the Attorney General works to protect District residents in ways that would be impossible without a chief legal officer connected to and accountable to the local community.

¹ Parallel changes could also impact the District's elected City Council and Mayor.

To emphasize this point, highlighted here are some of the most consequential successes in recent years of OAG.

Housing

Collusion on Rental Prices

In June 2025, OAG negotiated a settlement in excess of \$1 million with the property management firm William C. Smith & Co. (W.C. Smith) who was accused of colluding with other property management companies to inflate rents across over 50,000 apartment units in the District. In addition to paying civil penalties, legal fees, and payments to impacted renters, W.C. Smith agreed to stop sharing non-public information with other management companies; to implement internal policies to avoid information-sharing; and cooperate with enforcement actions.

Title Insurance Kickback Schemes

In August 2024, OAG announced that Allied Title & Escrow, KVS Title, Modern Settlements, and Union Settlements agreed to pay a combined \$3,290,000 to resolve an OAG investigation which revealed widespread use of illegal kickback schemes in the title insurance market. As part of the scheme, title companies offered real estate agents discounted ownership interests and lucrative profit sharing in exchange for business referrals that boosted the companies' revenues.

These anticompetitive arrangements limited District homebuyers' ability to shop for the best price and service when purchasing title insurance and escrow services. In addition to paying the penalties, much of which was transferred to the affected consumers, the companies agreed to end the practice of giving real estate agents consideration for the referral of title insurance business and to either cease their title insurance operations in the District or divest real estate agents from their ownership interests in the shell companies.

Building Violations

The D.C. Office of the Attorney General announced in October 2025 that the owners and managers of three District apartment complexes would pay \$700,000 and reform their practices that illegally discriminated against lower-income District residents to boost profits.

https://oag.dc.gov/newsroom?keywords=&start_date_article=2025-10-01&end_date_article=2025-10-31. These violations were limited to the District and do not extend to other jurisdictions.

In May 2025, OAG secured a \$6.8 million judgment against Adolphe Edwards, owner of A.J. Edwards Realty, for more than 1,400 documented housing code violations. The court ordered Edwards to pay an aggregate of \$1.5 million in rent refunds to nearly 100 tenants and \$5 million in civil penalties. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-secures-68-million>.

In April 2025, OAG obtained \$100,000 from a property management company for discriminatory refusal to rent to people under 24 or who had a felony conviction. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-secures-100000-property>.

Also in November 2025, OAG secured a \$41 million judgment against the former owners of Marbury Plaza (now re-named Langston Views), MP PPH LLC and Dr. Anthony Pilavas, for neglecting the safety and habitability of the complex, defying a court order to fix dangerous conditions there, and putting the lives of more than 2,500 tenants at risk by forcing them to live with chronic water leaks, widespread mold, and a lack of air conditioning, heat, and hot water. The judgment is the largest ever against a DC property owner, and one of the largest housing conditions judgments against a landlord in US history. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-secures-41-million>.

Workers' Rights

OAG also has established a track record of protecting District workers. For example, OAG recently settled a case with a car detailing and rental car management company. The allegation was that the company paid 84 workers less than the minimum wage and deprived them of overtime wages when they worked more than 40 hours a week by falsely classifying them as independent contractors instead of employees. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-secures-more-166k-workers>. In August 2025, OAG issued its Labor Day Report which highlighted that since Labor Day 2024, OAG secured nearly \$6 million through workers' rights enforcement actions across industries. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-releases-2025-labor-day>.

Consumer Protection

General

Local consumer protection enforcement is particularly important as the Federal Government is in the process of scaling back staffing and activities of the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), leaving local Attorneys General, including the D.C. Attorney General, to fill this gap so as to best protect local consumers.

Alerts

In addition to affirmatively challenging illegal activities affecting District residents, OAG has also been proactive in warning residents regarding consumer risks.

In March 2025, OAG issued an alert highlighting consumer legal rights when purchasing a used vehicle in the District, including, but not limited to, a reminder that used car dealers disclose prior repairs over \$1,000 and share known defects in writing.

<https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-issues-consumer-alert-2>.

In September 2025, OAG issued an alert warning consumers about predatory practices in the home solar system sales and loan industry in the District. Similarly, in June 2025, OAG alerted the public about third-party energy companies using deceptive tactics to pressure District consumers into switching providers. <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-warns-dc-residents-about>.

Other Consumer Education

The D.C. Office of the Attorney General is also active in consumer education. For example, in response to direct requests from the community, OAG developed a Credit Repair Workshop which provides District citizens assistance with understanding credit reports, disputing errors, and boosting credit scores. Each workshop session features a presentation covering how to read and interpret credit reports and fill out dispute letters, followed by one-on-one guidance with volunteers. <https://dcpspersists.org/events/credit-repair-workshop-hosted-by-the-office-of-the-attorney-general/>.

In addition, the Office of Consumer Protection within OAG offers the free educational resources, including an online consumer protection guide covering debt collection practices, identity theft, lemon laws, financial abuse, and ways to avoid a wide range of scams.

<https://oag.dc.gov/consumer-protection>.

Prosecuting Juvenile Offenders

As the District's chief prosecutor for crimes committed by juveniles, the Attorney General works to make the city safer through smart prosecution and innovative, evidence-informed initiatives. OAG's public safety efforts aim to stop violence before it happens and address the root causes of crime to prevent justice-involved young people from reoffending. In addition to vigorously prosecuting violent crime, OAG has significantly increased the number of young offenders it diverts to treatment programs, including the District's Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) program. Close to 75% of the participants that complete the program are not arrested again. <https://oag.dc.gov/oags-work-improve-public-safety-and-reduce>.

Local Nature of OAG Role; Accountability

These examples are just a small part of what the D.C. Attorney General does, but they illustrate the deeply local nature of the office. The Statement of Purpose in the D.C. Home Rule Act specifically provides that home rule in the District, to the greatest extent possible, is meant to "relieve Congress of the burden of legislation upon essentially local District matters." However, Congressional control was maintained with Congress's ability to overturn District legislation and approve budgetary matters.

The current Attorney General was elected by the residents of the District of Columbia. As such, the Attorney General is accountable to the same District residents and therefore must be

focused on protecting the interests of those District residents. If he or she does not, those same residents can elect another person who will better serve them. An Attorney General appointed by the President will not be accountable to District residents and is unlikely to be focused on local issues that matter to the local community. Just as states have their own Attorneys General, Washington, D.C. deserves to maintain a chief legal officer who is committed to local issues and enforcement.

* * *

The members of the Steering Committees of the D.C. Affairs and Public Interest and Courts Communities of the D.C. Bar Communities unanimously approved this statement on April 17, 2026.

The following Communities of the D.C. Bar Communities have joined in this statement: Antitrust and Consumer Law; Criminal Law and Individual Rights; Early Career Lawyers; Family Law; Health Law; Labor and Employment Law; Law Practice Management; Litigation; Public Interest and Courts; and Real Estate, Housing and Land Use.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brittany Sims Nwankwoala, Public Statement Coordinator for the Public Interest and Courts Community, D.C. Bar Communities
brittany.sims7@gmail.com