

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Contact: Rob Marus, Communications Director: (202) 724-5646; robert.marus@dc.gov
Andrew Phifer, Public Affairs Specialist: (202) 741-7652; andrew.phifer@dc.gov

Attorney General Thanks Councilmember Bonds for Legislation Designed to Protect Affordable Housing

Bill Would Make It Easier for Attorney General to Go After Slumlords

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Attorney General Karl A. Racine applauded At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds for introducing legislation that would make it easier for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to protect affordable housing in the District. The Rental Housing Accommodation Nuisance Abatement Amendment Act of 2016 would enhance OAG’s ability to take quick action against landlords who are neglecting their properties or attempting to effectively short-circuit renters’ rights under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA).

“I want to thank Councilmember Bonds and her co-sponsors, Councilmembers Evans, Cheh, Todd, May, Orange and Grosso, for demonstrating their commitment to protecting affordable housing in the District,” Attorney General Racine said. **“Every moment is critical when protecting tenants’ health and safety and preserving their rights under our city’s housing laws. The quicker housing problems are stopped and abated, the more tenants remain at the property to avail themselves of their rights. This bill will help us aid tenants more rapidly and effectively as we all fight to preserve safe, affordable housing.”**

The legislation would allow OAG to use its enforcement tools under the District’s nuisance-abatement laws to address rental housing whose owners have demonstrated a pattern of neglect posing a serious threat to the health, safety, or security of the tenants. OAG worked with Councilmember Bonds to draft the bill, which would give OAG the authority to issue pre-lawsuit investigative subpoenas compelling the production of documents and other evidence, such as the testimony of witnesses under oath, related to such cases.

OAG [recently helped force the owners of four rental properties in Congress Heights to agree to a court-monitored plan](#) that will ensure tenants in the buildings can live in safe, habitable conditions.