



BREAKING GROUND

BUILDING THE FIRST INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

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DEFINING THE PUBLIC INTEREST MISSION

Dear DC Residents,

When I took office in 2015 as DC's first elected Attorney General, I vowed to fulfill the statutory mandate that the Office of Attorney General be independent, use the law in the public interest, represent the District zealously in court, and defend DC values.

Perhaps the most significant change that came with becoming an independent office is the opportunity to creatively use the law to stand up for vulnerable residents. With the able and energetic assistance of my colleagues, I've done this in several areas over the last eight years.

For example, let's take a look at affordable housing. DC has witnessed significant growth push out and price out long-term residents—including Black and brown, senior, and low-income residents—resulting in some of the highest levels of displacement of any city in the country. During my tenure, we have been laser-focused on combatting this displacement. We've filed lawsuits against bad actors who sought to push out long-term residents to turn a profit and stood up for fairness in our city's zoning and land use decisions. Not only have we achieved positive results, we've also expanded into new frontiers that can serve as a model for preserving and increasing affordable housing.

And, as the chief prosecutor of crimes committed by children, I've sought to address the root causes of crime—such as trauma, poverty, familial instability, lack of education and economic opportunity—so kids are less likely to reoffend, which makes us all safer and is the right thing to do for our kids. We have innovated and reformed the juvenile justice system to reduce recidivism, empower victims, and help stop crime before it happens, including through our restorative justice and truancy-prevention efforts.

We've also used the law affirmatively to advance and defend DC values by aggressively expanding our work on behalf of consumers, seniors, tenants, and workers. From protecting the environment, the right to vote, immigrant rights, reproductive rights, or combatting hate, I have sought to build the most effective and respected Office of Attorney General in the country—all while regularly providing the Council, the Mayor, and DC agencies with legal advice; defending District agencies in court; and saving or recovering billions of tax dollars.

Key to achieving these successes on behalf of DC residents has been our office's ability to operate independently, but this independence is fragile. And so—just as I have done—I would implore future Attorneys General to fiercely defend any attempts to undermine that independence.

More than anything, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the residents of the District of Columbia. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to work on your behalf—alongside my exceptional colleagues—to make the District a more fair, just, and safe city.

Sincerely,



Karl A. Racine



ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY



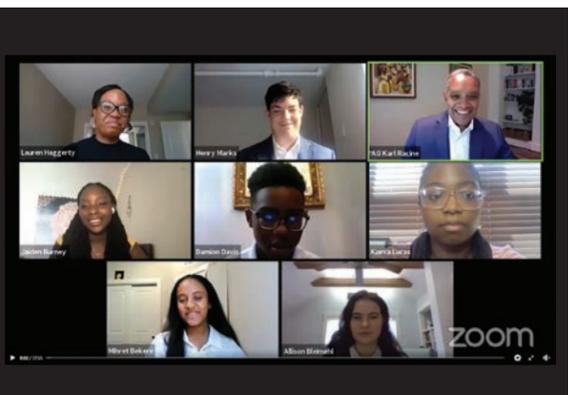
Helping DC Tenants Avoid Eviction During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DC received an initial \$200 million in federal funds to distribute to help tenants with rent and utility payments—but people who faced technology or language barriers struggled to complete the online application. So, we stepped in. With the help of local non-profits, ANC commissioners, law firms, and volunteers, **we hosted eight STAY DC clinics across the city and provided more than 153 DC tenants with one-on-one assistance** filling out their applications.



Starting the School Year Strong

We wanted to make sure Ward 8 families were able to start the 2021 school year off on the right foot, so we partnered with local community groups as well as the Jenkins Donelson Foundation to host a Community Giveaway at Turner Elementary School. **More than 100 families showed up to receive giveaway items** including masks, clothes, toys, school supplies, and more. Each family left the event with a big ticket item—such as a bicycle, microwave, blender, or a vacuum cleaner.



Connecting with DC Residents Virtually

When COVID-19 hit, we quickly ramped up our virtual capabilities to be able to meet DC residents where they were at—including their living room! Between 2020–2021, **we hosted nearly 30 virtual town halls** called “Take 30” where we would take 30 minutes to talk with local and national experts about topics important to our community. We spoke with health practitioners about caring for children during COVID-19, Reverend William H. Lamar IV from the Metropolitan AME Church about unifying in the aftermath of hate, and much more.



Training Educators to Spot Signs of Abuse & Neglect

Educators are often the first to spot the signs of child abuse and neglect, including human trafficking, and they are required to report it. This is why we have partnered with the Office of the State Superintendent for Education to provide educators more than **30 trainings on red flags and how to report them.**

WORKING FOR DC RESIDENTS



Attorney General Racine established a dedicated Office of Consumer Protection to stop deceptive and unethical business practices in DC. For example, in 2022, we reached a \$4 million settlement with a predatory online lender that had offered illegal, high-cost loans with interest rates ranging from 99-251% (42 times above DC’s legal limit).



“ Many years ago, I was struggling financially. I signed up with this company called Elastic and got a loan from them. It helped me out.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but the fees were really high. I paid them, though. I never missed a payment.

In 2022, to my shock and astonishment, I received an email from this exploitative company. They told me that as a result of an agreement they had reached with the DC Office of Attorney General, I would be receiving a payment in my bank account of more than \$1,000.

At first, I did not believe the email. I mean, usually, when things seem too good to be true, they are. But I googled and found out that everything was up and up -- I found a press release from Karl Racine’s office announcing the settlement, and several reputable media outlets reported on it.

This is an example of government working for us. It is an example of government working for consumers. I am very appreciative.”

- Ward 1 Resident

SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Since Attorney General Racine took office, we've won

\$201.8+ MILLION

for DC residents.



\$35+ million

in restitution for **DC consumers** from mediations, investigations, and lawsuits against deceptive businesses.



\$4+ million

for **DC workers** who were denied hard-earned wages and benefits.



\$4.8+ million

for **DC tenants** forced to live in unsafe and unlawful conditions.



\$79+ million

for **victims of the opioid crisis**, including \$49+ million from distributors and manufacturers, and a \$30+ million settlement with the Sackler Family & Purdue Pharma that is under appeal.

We've also been good stewards of taxpayer dollars, by saving or bringing in money as a result of our legal actions.

- Since 2015, we've helped the District save **\$3 billion+** in taxpayer funds that were claimed in lawsuits brought against DC government.
- Since 2015, we've won **\$88+ million** in payments and penalties through our **consumer protection** work.
- Since 2016, we've won **\$10+ million** in penalties through our **housing** work.
- Since 2017, we've won **\$3.8+ million** in penalties through our **workers rights** work.
- Since 2019, we've won **\$10+ million** in payments and penalties through our **civil rights** work.
- Since 2020, we've won **\$60+ million** in penalties through our **environmental justice** work.

SERVING DC FAMILIES



Our Mental Health section represents the District's Department of Behavioral Health in court proceedings to ensure that individuals who need help receive mental health treatment.

“ My daughter has schizoaffective disorder. She was in [DC] homeless. I couldn't reach her anymore because she wasn't taking her medicine. I was running into dead ends. So, one day I was able to connect with OAG. I never even knew that OAG had that much power to help me to navigate through the courts and the court process. **I met with an OAG attorney and she gave me peace and gave my daughter life again.** It was really a life-or-death situation. OAG stepped in and helped her and now she is doing really well at St. Elizabeths. I have so much peace now.”

- Holly Funk, Mother of Kidest Warren (Patient at St. Elizabeths)

Our Child Support Services Division (CSSD) works to ensure all District children have the support they need to thrive by establishing paternity and obtaining child support. CSSD's workforce development programs help create pathways to long-term employment and foster healthy co-parenting.

“ When I first came to the child support office I was broken, hurt, scared and lost. From day one they made me feel like family. I let the group know that I was homeless and living in my car and they all lifted up my spirits. As a black man who is a father this group is needed. For once in a long time I didn't feel alone. I felt at home. Beyond helping me find multiple jobs they helped me find myself. They helped me get better mentally. I know they say this program is to help guys get jobs, but I do not feel like that.

I feel like this program helps guys get their life back on track. It helps us look at the child support system differently.”

- Aaron Askew, Ward 5 Resident & Participant in the Alternative Solution Program



COLLABORATING ACROSS GOVERNMENT



Our office works closely with the DC Council to ensure our laws protect District residents. We:

- Provide legal advice on proposed legislation;
- Defend District laws when challenged in court;
- Introduce legislation to further District priorities; and
- Champion legislative efforts.

This daily, collaborative work with the Council has helped build a stronger, safer, and more equitable District of Columbia.



Here are some examples of how we have worked with the Council over Attorney General Racine's tenure to build a better DC. We've:



Created a Litigation Support Fund to allow us to use the proceeds from our lawsuits and reinvest them in the community. We use the money to build up our legal efforts and contribute \$7 million annually towards the city's violence prevention efforts.



Expanded protections for tenants, consumers, and workers by drafting and advocating for bills that update and strengthen critical laws.



Protected District residents during the COVID-19 public health emergency by advising the Council on (and successfully defending) an eviction moratorium that kept vulnerable District residents in their homes.



Increased public safety and fairness in the justice system by supporting efforts to interrupt community violence before it happens, increase treatment for justice-involved youth, and empower victims of crime with more options and support.



Enhanced civil rights protections for DC residents by updating District law to allow our office to bring civil suits against anyone who commits acts of bias-motivated violence.

Our office zealously defends District government in court while also attempting to resolve lawsuits brought against it in a fair and equitable way.

Under Attorney General Racine's leadership, we successfully ended three long-term consent decree cases impacting DC agencies. By successfully resolving these cases, we helped improve critical services DC agencies provide to vulnerable District residents—including children—and saved the District significant money going forward.



DID YOU KNOW?

Our office defends 400+ cases on behalf of DC government at any given time.

We also work closely with the Metropolitan Police Department and other District agencies to protect our community and rehabilitate young people who come into contact with the justice system.



In 2015, when Attorney General Racine took office, he immediately worked with the Council to end the routine shackling of children who appear in court. Now, we instead ensure that children entering the justice system get the services they need to break the cycle of violence. Our data shows that most children do not recidivate when we pair accountability with personalized services like health treatment, mentoring and tutoring, and family supports.



In 2020, we set up a 24-hour/7 day-a-week hotline for prosecutors to advise police officers on the scene of a juvenile crime. We provide officers with legal advice on how to collect the best evidence for the strongest case possible in court. That hotline has been effective at improving the quality of evidence we have for our juvenile cases, assisting police officers as they do their jobs every day, and reducing harmful interactions between police and young people.

CREATING AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY

Since assuming office in 2015, Attorney General Racine has built an independent agency that works every day on behalf of DC residents, including by creating new initiatives and programs.

2015

Created the **Right Direction Awards** to honor District youth who have demonstrated resilience and are positively impacting their community.

Established a dedicated **Office of Consumer Protection** to stop deceptive and unethical business practices in the District.

Defeated **legislation** that would have infringed on the independence of the Office of Attorney General.

2017

Created the **Public Advocacy Division** to file lawsuits on behalf of DC residents and to serve as an innovative, aggressive public watchdog.

Created an in-house **Restorative Justice Section**—the first of its kind housed in a prosecutor's office in the nation—to offer a victim-centered alternative to addressing crime.

Launched the **I Belong Here!** program to motivate 6th and 7th grade students to attend school.

2018

Launched a diversion program—called **ATTEND**—to identify barriers to school attendance and link parents with needed services and support.

Established a **Special Victims Unit** to seek justice for victims of abuse and violent crimes and provide them with targeted, trauma-informed services.

Launched **Cure the Streets**—a pilot public safety program aimed at reducing gun violence—in two sites.

Designed—in conjunction with the DC Superior Court—a program called **HOPE Court**, to better serve youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

2019

Launched the **High School Advisory Council**—an intensive program where DC students make important policy recommendations to the Attorney General.

Expanded **Cure the Streets** to operate in six sites.

Expanded our office's litigation on behalf of DC residents by establishing two additional sections:

- » **The Elder Justice Section**, which protects District seniors and vulnerable adults from financial exploitation.
- » **The Civil Rights Section**, which investigates and files lawsuits against entities with discriminatory policies and practices that harm DC residents.

2021

Expanded our office's **Public Advocacy Division** by establishing a standalone **Workers' Rights & Antifraud Section**, dedicated to fighting wage theft and advancing workers' rights in DC long-term.

Created a **Public Corruption Section** to prosecute local corruption cases in the District of Columbia, in coordination with the United States Attorney's Office.

Created a dedicated **Policy & Legislative Affairs** team to advance our office's legislative and policy priorities locally and nationally.

Doubled our **Restorative Justice Section** by adding nearly 10 staff members.

Created the **Equitable Land Use Section** to advocate for the public interest—including affordable housing, racial equity, and environmental justice—before the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment.

2022

Expanded our **ATTEND** truancy program to three additional schools.

Expanded **Cure the Streets** to operate in 10 sites across the District.

DELIVERING RESULTS

We have stood up for DC consumers, tenants, and workers by:



Filing **18+** cases against tech and gig economy companies.



Mediating **13,000+** consumer complaints.



Filing **17+** cases against slumlords.



Filing **10** cases to remedy **20** nuisance properties.



Opening **90+** cases and investigations of wage theft.

We have had significant victories in court.

We've won **90%** of our appeals.

We've won **95%** of the cases where we are defending District government.

INVESTING IN YOUTH

Kids have a better shot at a successful future when they are in the classroom learning. That's why Attorney General Racine launched ATTEND and I Belong Here! to help combat chronic absenteeism. These programs help identify barriers to attendance, link families with needed services and support, and create incentives to motivate student attendance. Building on these programs' success and responding to an increase in demand, our office announced an expansion of ATTEND in 2022 so it now operates in six schools.

"The OAG ATTEND Program provides targeted, effective attendance interventions, support, and resources to our students and their families. The OAG ATTEND staff are family-centered, responsive, creative, and diligent."

– Joy Mayo-King, Social Worker at Malcom X Elementary School (Ward 8)



We have worked to enhance public safety & support District youth by successfully:

Completing **215+** restorative justice conferences with **155+** victims of crime.

Transitioning **2,200+** children from foster care into a permanent home.

Conducting mediations with **600+** families to keep kids in school.

Diverting **2,700+** youth to receive customized wrap-around services.

Conducting **130+** trainings for **6,500+** people on how to spot and report human trafficking.

Collecting **\$440+** million in child support on behalf District children.

FOCUSING ON EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS



Attorney General Racine has prioritized innovative solutions to address some of the most pressing problems facing the District.



Making DC safer for families and children

- We were the first prosecutor's office in the country to launch an in-house restorative justice program to give crime victims agency while treating all parties—including those who cause harm—with dignity.
- We are on the forefront of combatting the scourge of deadly and untraceable ghost guns. Not only have we successfully advocated for federal rules that would make it harder to get these types of guns, we also were the first jurisdiction to sue a major ghost gun manufacturer—and win—for illegally advertising ghost guns to DC residents.
- We were the first DC agency to implement a community-based violence interruption program—Cure the Streets—to combat gun violence by addressing its root causes and working with those most at risk of committing or being victimized by such crime.



Fighting displacement and advocating for affordable housing

- Using DC's strong consumer protection laws, our office has fought alongside tenants and advocates to ensure that every District resident has a safe place to live. We sued the notorious slumlord Sanford Capital four times for forcing tenants to live in inhumane conditions. As a result, we successfully returned over \$1.1 million to 155 tenants and doubled the number of affordable housing units on the property near Congress Heights Metro.
- We gained authority to have our zoning and land use lawyers—some of the best in the District—advocate for affordable housing, racial equity, and environmental justice to help level the playing field between wealthy developers and long-term residents.



Holding the District to the highest standards of integrity

- We filed two lawsuits against the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to ensure that residents could access safe and accessible housing.
- We stood up a new unit to combat local public corruption, including campaign finance violations, bribery, fraud, and misuse of government resources.
- We introduced legislation to end pay-to-play politics, make political donations transparent, and create a "bright line" between candidates and PACs.



“Attorney General Racine's commitment to (Restorative Justice) has made his office one of NVRDC's most trusted partners and led to concrete changes that infuse a trauma-responsive approach into how we invest in healing after crime. **OAG's leadership in creating a restorative justice program is one of the most innovative solutions in the country** aiming to include survivors of crime and contemporaneously working to reduce future violence.”

- Bridgette Stumpf, Executive Director, Network for Victim Recovery of DC

BECOMING THE BEST ATTORNEY GENERAL

OFFICE IN THE COUNTRY



Attorney General Racine has worked hard to fight for DC autonomy and statehood and to elevate DC on the national stage.

Fighting for DC autonomy and statehood



We've advocated before the court by:

- Supporting DC residents' lawsuit claiming that Congress is violating our constitutional rights by denying us representation.
- Opposing the federal Bureau of Prisons' unequal and discriminatory treatment of District residents in its custody.
- Opposing the federal prosecutor's policy of bringing gun-possession cases in federal court (instead of DC's local court), which would disproportionately subject Black residents to harsher sentences.



We've leveraged national support.

- **37** Attorneys General helped us advocate for DC to receive federal COVID-19 relief funds—just like any other state.
- **24** Attorneys General helped us push back against Republican Attorneys General who made baseless legal claims against DC statehood.
- **20** Attorneys General joined our letter urging Congress to pass HR51 to make DC a state.

Elevating DC on the national stage



Defending democracy: We filed over 25 briefs to protect voting access, oppose unfair voting restrictions against returning citizens, and defend deadline extensions for mail-in ballots. We also filed a civil lawsuit against violent groups and individuals for the role they played in planning and carrying out the deadly January 6 attack on the US Capitol.



Combatting hate: Hate crimes are on the rise. That's why when Attorney General Racine was elected by his peers across the country to serve as President of the National Association of Attorneys General he launched an initiative to focus on combatting hate.



Standing up to Big Tech: Attorney General Racine has worked to level the playing field between giant tech companies and DC residents by filing lawsuits against Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple and introducing a cutting-edge bill that would make it illegal for businesses to use discriminatory algorithms.



CONNECTING WITH OUR OFFICE

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FOLLOW US



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@dcoag



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THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL IS HERE TO HELP. TO REPORT OR LEARN MORE ABOUT...

Data theft, scams, or unlawful and abusive business practices:

Call: 202.442.9828

Text: 202.738.5212

Email: consumer.protection@dc.gov

Visit: oag.dc.gov/ConsumerComplaint

Discrimination

Call: 202.442.9828

Email: OAGCivilRights@dc.gov

Visit: oag.dc.gov/CivilRightsComplaint

Neglectful or abusive landlords

Call: 202.442.9828

Email: SocialJustice@dc.gov

Visit: oag.dc.gov/tenantrights

Wage theft

Call: 202.442.9828

Email: workers@dc.gov or trabajadores@dc.gov

Visit: oag.dc.gov/wagerights

Financial exploitation, abuse, or neglect of elders or vulnerable adults

Call: 202.727.3807

Email: elderjustice@dc.gov