

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THE DEPARTMENT
OF MOTOR VEHICLES AGENCY PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING
ON FISCAL YEARS 2023 – 2024**



Testimony of
Gabriel Robinson, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles

Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Charles Allen, Chairman

February 16, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairman Allen, Committee members, councilmembers, and staff of the Committee. I am Gabriel Robinson, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). I am pleased to testify before you today.

Prior to sharing the major Fiscal Year 2023 and year-to-date Fiscal Year 2024 DMV accomplishments, on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser, I would like to thank our customers, Chairman Allen, this Committee, and the rest of the Council for your support. The feedback you provide to this agency is valued and critically important in guiding our decision-making processes for service improvements. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all of my colleagues at DMV for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving our customers.

The mission of DC DMV is to promote the safe operation of motor vehicles and public safety, while providing outstanding customer service. As I frequently tell my team, our agency is truly “saving lives every single day.”

The agency has three operational divisions: Adjudication Services, Vehicle Services, and Driver Services. Our Adjudication Services team provides ticket processing, ticket noticing, hearings, and hearing support services to residents and non-residents, in order to render legally sound decisions on parking, photo enforcement and minor moving violations. The Adjudication team also ensures proper processing of violation and penalty payments for these infractions. Additionally, driver license revocation and reinstatement hearings are provided through Adjudication Services. Vehicle Services provides certification and inspection services to residents, businesses, and government entities so they may legally park, drive and sell their vehicles in the District of Columbia. Finally,

Driver Services provides driver certification and identification services to residents, ensuring they have the proper credentials to reflect identity, residence and driving qualifications, so they may legally and safely operate their vehicles.

DC DMV serves over 623,000 licensed drivers and identification card holders in the District, and over 310,000 registered vehicle owners. We interact with District residents and non-residents, with an average of 3,200 daily customer contacts—more than almost any other District government agency. We've collected ticket payments for more than 2.7 million tickets. In Fiscal Year 2023 we met the needs of 298,536 customers across the four service center locations, and this fiscal year we have already provided services to over 65,881 District residents. Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2023 we provided adjudication services, including conducting over 210,000 in-person and mail hearings, and over 20,000 virtual hearings. In Fiscal Year 2023, we inspected more than 178,000 vehicles, including 8,300 inspections completed using our self-service On Board Diagnostic (OBD) emissions kiosk at the Takoma Recreation Center on 300 Van Buren St., NW. The agency also processed and mailed products generated from more than 392,000 online transactions.

In Fiscal Year 2023, DMV launched several new, innovative products and initiatives to better serve our customers and streamline our internal processes.

Starting in January 2023, DMV announced that all District residents could enroll in the agency's new Ticket Alert Service (TAS) program to get quick notifications on tickets. Previously, residents had to have a ticket on record before enrolling in TAS. Enrollment is free, and the online service provides users with near real-time notifications of ticket-related activity on up to four vehicles and

a single driver's license. Once a driver or vehicle owner has enrolled, they simply log in to their account to check the status of tickets. Additionally, users may elect to receive notifications via text and/or email when an event occurs, such as when tickets are issued to a vehicle, payments are applied, a decision is made on an adjudicated ticket, a ticketed vehicle becomes boot eligible, and more.

With a TAS account, users can log on and view all images associated with a ticket, and all information contained in the ticket history file, such as hearing requests and outcomes, payments, appeals, and past records. They can also access links to complete ticket payments and schedule hearings online. The Ticket Alert Service was designed with District residents in mind and is also open to non-residents, although anyone living outside DC is still required to have been issued at least one ticket within the past 18 months in order to enroll in TAS.

Then, on July 17, 2023, DC DMV unveiled our new Uniquely DC Secure Driver License and ID Cards, a revamp of the District's credentials that harnesses innovative technology, exceptional security and unparalleled design that is *uniquely DC*. This new secure credential, along with the current central issuance process, incorporates updated security features to reduce fraud attempts. Created in partnership with Thales Group, the new credential design will help protect DC residents from identity theft, putting their public safety at the forefront of our operations. It features vibrant colors, cherry blossoms, DC's official bird, the Wood Thrush, and the iconic Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. For customers who currently have the previous version of the DC credential, the purchase of a new ID is not required. A current driver license or ID card remains valid until its noted date of expiration.

Educating residents about the importance of obtaining a REAL ID credential has continued to remain a priority for DMV throughout Fiscal Year 2023 and into 2024. A REAL ID driver license or identification card complies with federal security standards and assures that residents have access to federal facilities as well as the ability to board an airplane. Currently, 99.98% of District residents are REAL ID compliant. DMV has converted more than 6,100 credentials over the past fiscal year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in December 2022, the Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID compliance deadline to May 7, 2025.

DMV also began our implementation of the new mandatory Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program in Fiscal Year 2023. District residents holding a DC driver license, who have been convicted, or found administratively liable, of an alcohol or drug related driving offense on or after December 19, 2022, are now required to enroll in the IID Program and install interlock devices. These devices are breath alcohol analyzers that connect to the ignition system of a vehicle. Once convicted or found liable of an alcohol or drug related driving offense, a driver must complete an application and enroll in the IID program online through DMV's website.

Enrollment in the program must be completed within 30 days from the date of conviction, or date found liable, and there is a non-refundable \$50 application fee. Failure to enroll in the IID Program will result in the indefinite revocation of an individual's DC driver license and suspension of all vehicles registered to the driver. Residents holding a driver license that has been revoked for more than six months will also be required to retake DC DMV's knowledge test and road skills test. Again, with public safety at the forefront, our commitment to the IID program prevents unsafe driving activities and deters repeat offenders.

DMV revised its annual registration fees for electric passenger vehicles (other than a motorcycle or motor-driven cycles) with a manufacturer's shipping weight of less than 5,000 pounds. As of October 1, 2023, these vehicles can subtract 1,000 pounds from their manufacturer's weight when renewing the vehicle registration. A brand-new electric passenger vehicle under 5,000 pounds also became eligible for a \$36 registration fee per year for the first two years of registration.

Also, an additional vehicle class has been added, Class VI. It is for vehicles weighing 3,500 pounds or greater that have been issued a disability license plate, with the additional weight caused by equipment to accommodate a disability. The registration is \$72 per year. These updates support our commitment to energy efficiency and accessibility, while reflecting cost-saving measures that benefit District residents.

DMV has also enhanced the service center in-person experience for customers with hearing impairments, via the purchase and implementation of upgraded Ubiduo devices in Fiscal Year 2023. These devices convert typed text to audio speech, making face-to-face communication between agency staff and customers faster and easier. In Fiscal Year 2024, we are glad to be connecting with the Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH) to reach and better serve the District's Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened residents.

In Adjudication, DMV expanded its virtual hearing options to include all hearing types: parking violations, minor moving violations, and Automated Traffic Enforcement tickets, also known as photo enforcement citations. In Fiscal Year 2023, the number of virtual hearings scheduled and conducted doubled to over 20,000. Our IT division also worked with the agency's ticket processing

vendor to establish a real-time interface to update ticket payments made via the DMV Mobile App. Previously, the ticket payments were updated to the ticket system overnight through a file transfer from the app. We also successfully launched a customer service feature through the DMV website which allows customers to connect in real-time with the Hearing Support Team for general ticket and operational information on weekdays, Monday to Friday, from 10am to 2pm.

Also, pursuant to our submission of a budget enhancement request, we were given budgetary approval to hire 25 hearing examiner FTEs to support the expansion of the District's Automated Traffic Enforcement Program (ATE). We have already begun onboarding more than half of these examiners and expect to complete staffing these positions in early 2024.

DMV is also expected to implement and launch the Knowledge Test Educational Outreach Program for teenagers and young adults, ages 16-21. This program provides young people with the opportunity to participate in DC DMV's Permit Prep Boot Camp with the goal of taking and passing the Knowledge Test, which will enable them to obtain a learner's permit. Space is limited; however, students who are able to attend will leave this fast-paced, three-day boot camp with the confidence, knowledge, and prep materials necessary to take the DC DMV Knowledge Test. These soon-to-be drivers will also enjoy a redesigned and improved DC DMV Driver Manual that is easier to navigate with more user-friendly features. By April 2024, the new manual will be available for download via the DC DMV website with Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and Amharic translations.

Supporting our vision of being leaders in innovation and technology, DMV continues to make improvements and additions to the agency's mobile app. We are seeing increased usage of the app,

with over 125,000 unique downloads, and over 42,000 regular users. By comparison, in September of 2020, the agency had 5,000 regular app users. Customers completed over 24,000 transactions from their smart devices in Fiscal Year 2023, including ticket payments, driver license and ID card renewal, and registration renewal.

In Fiscal Year 2023, DMV added several more transactions to the mobile app, including address change requests, Vision Zero educational videos, and the DC DMV Driver Manual, among other helpful products and features. We continue to encourage the public to use DMV's app with messaging through our #SkipTheTrip campaign. The Mobile App is free and can be downloaded from Apple's App Store and the Google Play Store by searching DC DMV.

In addition to interacting with District residents through the app, DMV has been proactive in announcing operational updates through multiple communications channels, including press releases, social media, the DMV website, direct mail, emails, and an electronic newsletter that is distributed to more than 500,000 subscribers. The agency hosts a live web chat on the first Thursday of each month, in which participants ask DMV-related questions online and receive a real-time response directly from the Director, and other agency leaders. As part of our 2024 Communications plan, we aim to double our video output, enabling more visibility into agency operations and showcasing more members of our exceptional team. We continue to utilize Zendesk to streamline our communications processes, averaging over 1,100 service request responses a month from our stellar Correspondence Team. This Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform was implemented in 2021, allowing the agency's correspondence representatives to respond on a single platform to customer inquiries submitted through various channels, including

phone, website, and social media.

During FY2023 and into FY2024, DMV is also engaging directly with the public through hiring events, participation in community meetings, partnerships with other agencies and presentations at various public forums. On November 9, 2023, DMV participated in the #DCHiresVets Career Fair at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. Hosted by the DC Department of Human Resources, DC DMV held interviews for the 26 open Hearing Examiner positions. During this event, DC DMV made 16 contingency offers. In fact, we were recruiting at the Winter Hiring Fair this past Tuesday, February 13th, where we interviewed candidates and made contingency offers to fill four Supervisory Legal Instrument Examiner positions.

As part of Child Safety Passenger Week, which took place September 17-23, 2023, DC DMV hosted a National Car Seat Check Day at its Inspection Station on September 23rd. During this event, we gave out 20 free car seats, conducted car seat checkups and provided information on other safety resources to District residents. We participated in another Car Seat Inspection Event on November 20th in partnership with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), at which DMV gave away 30 free car seats to District residents.

In another partnership event with DDOT, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and the Street-Smart regional safety traffic campaign, DMV's Southwest and Benning Ridge Service Centers hosted two "Lives Shatter on Impact" Testimonial Wall campaigns in May and December, to educate the public about pedestrian and bicycle safety. The informational display featured videos and written testimonials from residents impacted by a serious or deadly crash.

Furthering our relationship with the communities we serve is important to us, and in Fiscal Year 2023, DMV leadership attended and presented at thirteen ANC community meetings, where residents heard directly about important DMV updates and improvements to services. As of February 7, 2024, we have already attended seven ANC or community meetings. We continue to prioritize these meetings to hear directly about residents' concerns and provide pertinent updates to the services affecting their neighborhoods. We were also proud to support our senior residents and the DC Department of Aging and Community Living by participating in the Mayor's 24th Annual Senior Holiday Celebration. Agency representatives answered attendee questions and handed out DMV branded giveaways.

DMV remains committed to serving the public at a high level as demonstrated by the large volume of work the agency has produced to date. Additionally, we remain focused on continuing to operate our facilities in a manner that keeps everyone safe, including our customers and our employees. I personally want to thank Team DMV for their dedication to exceptional customer service and public safety. Our commitment to these values will remain at the forefront of our work in Fiscal Year 2024.

My team and I continue to look forward to improving our operational processes and making it easier for DMV customers to utilize our services. Again, we appreciate the support we have received from the Council and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the quality of service to the residents of the District of Columbia. In closing, we would like to thank Mayor Bowser for her continued leadership and commitment to good governance and accountability. I will now address any questions you may have.