

**PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE ON
BILL 16-228, “BOARD OF REAL PROPERTY
ASSESSMENT AND APPEALS REFORM ACT OF 2005”**

**Before the
Committee on Finance and Revenue
Council of the District of Columbia**

The Honorable Jack Evans, Chairman

**April 26, 2005, 11:30 a.m.
Room 412, John A. Wilson Building**



**Testimony of
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Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Office of Tax and Revenue**

**Natwar M. Gandhi
Chief Financial Officer
Government of the District of Columbia**

Good morning, Chairman Evans and members of the Committee on Finance and Revenue. I am Daniel L. Black, Jr., Deputy Chief Financial Officer for the Office of Tax and Revenue. I am pleased to present testimony today on Bill 16-228, the “Board of Real Property Assessment and Appeals Reform Act of 2005.”

Bill 16-228 would make several changes to the existing statutory requirements relating to the Board of Real Property Assessment and Appeals – otherwise known as “BRPAA.”

- The number of years in a term a BRPAA member serves would be increased from two years to three years.
- Only the Mayor and members of the Council would be limited from serving on BRPAA.
- Reference to the extinct Board of Equalization and Review would be eliminated.
- Terms of BRPAA members would be staggered beginning April 1, 2006, so that every two years, six members would complete their terms and six new members would be appointed to serve on the board.
- Persons who are appointed to fill vacancies and serve partial terms would no longer be limited to one-term appointments.
- Finally, Bill 16-228 would require that all real property assessment appeals be finalized by February 1 of each year. BRPAA panels would have 30 days to finalize residential appeals and 60 days to finalize commercial appeals following the relevant hearing.

As you know, BRPAA serves as an important level of appeal for District property owners who seek redress in the valuation and assessment of their property. We believe many of the changes proposed in Bill 16-228 would help provide better continuity in the appeals process. We are concerned, however, with two of the provisions of this proposal. First, we believe that the prohibition on serving on BRPAA should be extended to District government employees. We note that there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest should a government official be a BRPAA member, in particular those who may have expertise in real property but may also be involved in the assessment and valuation process for the District. Second, we believe that the proposal should make some provision in new subsection (m) in the event that BRPAA does not dispose of all pending appeals by February 1. Alternatively, we recommend that you consider adding language that would deem the final determination of an administrative review to be the decision of BRPAA if a case is not finalized by February 1.

Thank you, Chairman Evans, for the opportunity to comment on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other Council members might have at this time.

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