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For Immediate Release
April 21, 2010

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**Thomas States Postponed Vote on “DCPS Teacher Reinstatement Emergency Act of 2010”
Is Causing Unnecessary Delay in Accountability
*Proposed Amendments to Bill Creating Unnecessary Confusion***

Washington, DC- Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas, Jr. announced today that the Council’s decision to postpone voting on the “District of Columbia Public School Teacher Reinstatement Emergency Act of 2010” until its May 4, 2010 legislative session is causing unnecessary delays in accountability. Thomas also stated that proposed amendments will create unnecessary confusion.

The emergency legislation, which Thomas introduced at the legislative session on April 20, 2010, would require a two-step process: 1) for the Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to make an official determination as to whether DCPS currently has a \$34 million surplus in its personnel budget; and 2) for OCFO, should it determine that funds are available and the initial claim that the FY2010 Reduction-in-Force of 266 DCPS employees was based on faulty accounting, that DCPS submit a feasibility plan regarding reinstatement of inappropriately separated employees.

Thomas consulted extensively with the Council’s Office of the General Counsel to ensure that the emergency legislation did not usurp the authority of the executive or legislative branches, or run afoul of the District’s Home Rule Charter. Thomas had the support of Chairman Vincent Gray, At-Large Councilmember Michael Brown, Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry, and Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander to move the bill. Nonetheless, amendments creating uncertainty about the intent and projected outcomes of the legislation were proposed, and the bill was tabled until May 4, 2010.

“While I always welcome input from my Council colleagues on any bill I introduce, I am concerned that the amendments suggested would add unnecessary confusion around legislation that has a simple and clearly defined two-step process,” said Councilmember Thomas. “Between now and our May 4th legislative session, I will continue to work with our legal staff and be open to discussion with my colleagues. And most importantly, I will ensure that key questions are answered for the 266 DCPS employees who may have been wrongly terminated,” said Thomas.

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