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For Immediate Release

April 26, 2010

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Thomas Praises Court Decision Allowing Union Review of Financial Data Available to Rhee at Time of Layoffs, Renews Call for Passage of "District of Columbia Public School Teacher Reinstatement Emergency Act of 2010"

Washington, DC-Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas, Jr. today praised DC Superior Court Judge Judith Bartnoff's April 23rd decision to grant the Washington Teachers' Union limited discovery to determine what financial information was available to Chancellor Rhee at the time of the October 2009 layoffs of 266 DCPS employees. When issuing her decision, Judge Bartnoff expressed concerns about the legitimacy of the layoffs in light of the fact that the DCPS personnel budget posted a \$34 million surplus three months after the layoffs occurred.

"I am pleased that Judge Bartnoff is providing the Teachers' Union with limited discovery to investigate this matter," said Councilmember Thomas. "We need to get to the bottom of this financial morass."

Thomas also renewed his call for Council passage of the "District of Columbia Public School Teacher Reinstatement Emergency Act of 2010," which he introduced at the April 20, 2010 legislative session. The bill, of which the Council voted to postpone consideration the bill until its May 4, 2010 legislative session, would require: 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.

"Judge Bartnoff's decision makes this bill more timely than ever," said Thomas.