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**Councilmember Thomas to Bring Workforce Development and
Small Business Retention Initiative to Ward 5**

Washington, DC—Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr. today announced that he will be working closely with Walmart to implement a comprehensive workforce development initiative and small business retention program in Ward 5 in conjunction with the firm’s plan to open several stores in Washington, D.C. “Investing in our community, with jobs and workforce development programs, as well as initiatives to improve the competitiveness of our local businesses, will stabilize our communities, grow our economy, and provide our residents with the ability to support themselves and their families,” said Thomas.

The city is in desperate need of good jobs. Unemployment in the District stands at 9.8 percent, and in Ward 5 it is a staggering 15.5 percent. The new plan to bring Walmart to D.C., unveiled last week, would bring approximately **1,200 new jobs and 1,000 construction jobs** to the city, **generating an estimated \$10 million annually** in tax revenue to the District. Last year alone, District residents spent more than \$41 million at Walmart stores in the Washington area.

Walmart’s DC project will use 100 percent private funding. It does not depend on government incentives or taxpayer dollars. The proposal includes a site in the heart of Ward 5 at New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road, NE.

“With the economy in dire straits, we are seeing not only residents without jobs, but residents without the training needed for the jobs,” said Thomas. “We need employers who will come to this city and truly invest in our economy by investing in our residents and our local business community.”

The staggering levels of unemployment come at a time when services, training, and job programs are hurting the most. Thomas values Walmart’s past commitment to supporting workforce and small business development initiatives, and looks forward to working with the company to ensure comprehensive workforce development and small business retention programs that will benefit the residents of Ward 5.

“I look forward to working with Walmart on further investment in Ward 5,” said Thomas. “Our residents need more businesses that are willing to invest in the community as well as the economy. We have a number of organizations in Ward 5 sponsoring programs to strengthen our local business community and provide workers with the skills they need to succeed. Partnering with a business like Walmart will give these initiatives an invaluable boost.”

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