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**Thomas Seeks Subpoena Authority to Investigate  
DPR Early Childhood Program's Funding Irregularities**

**Washington, DC**-Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr., Chair of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, held an additional committee meeting yesterday at which committee members voted to support a resolution authorizing the committee to investigate the Department of Parks and Recreation's Early Childhood Program. Councilmember Thomas is confident that the entire Council will approve the resolution at its next scheduled legislative session on July 31, 2009.

The "Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation Early Childhood Program Investigation Authorization Resolution of 2009" authorizes the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation to use subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses, obtain testimony, or produce documents or other information or tangible items. The investigation will cover the transfer of funds for early childhood and daycare programs from the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

Thomas determined the need to launch an investigation after the Administration closed a number of DPR daycare sites subsequent to Council passage of a law requiring the sites to remain open until September 30, 2009. At issue are inconsistent testimony, under oath, about the source of the funding for the day care program and how the program has been administered by DPR and OSSE. Also of concern, which Councilmember Thomas highlighted during his opening remarks at the July 16, 2009 committee meeting, are:

- The DPR director signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in February 2009 agreeing to a reduction of allotted daycare funds from \$6.2 million to \$4.5 million. The MOU was never discussed with Council prior to its execution and was not mentioned in any subsequent testimony before the committee.
- OSSE cut DPR's daycare funding based on under enrollment. DPR was instructed by OSSE to freeze enrollment in the program despite a long waiting list for openings.
- DPR officials alleged to staff and parents that the Council's bill requiring the daycare facilities to remain open was illegitimate and unfunded, despite a clean fiscal impact statement to the contrary.

"My staff and I have tried to work harmoniously with DPR and OSSE officials to resolve outstanding issues relating to the funding of DPR daycare programs," said Councilmember Thomas. "Because DPR officials refuse to participate in any hearings or roundtables on the matter, we have no choice but to seek authorization to launch an investigation with subpoena power."

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