GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

ADDRESS REPLY TO
"FIRE CHIEF"

Vincent C. Gray, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Chairman Gray,

December 15, 2008

On May 30, 2008, you, at the request of the Mayor, introduced Bill 17-0768: "Paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician Transfer Amendment Act of 2008." This bill was designed to support the unification of the operational personnel of the D.C. Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department into a fully-functional all-hazards workforce.

Regrettably, Bill 17-0768, as it currently stands, contains significant changes to the version introduced. These changes are contrary to the letter and intent of the original legislation. These changes, if adopted, would have the practical effect of obstructing implementation of Recommendation 1 of the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Emergency Medical Services, 9/27/07 (Task Force): "*The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services shall transition to a fully integrated, all hazards agency.*"

Bill 17-0768 would codify the category of single-role EMS provider and perpetuate the very "cultural divide" that the EMS Task Force recommendations were designed to eliminate. Further, Bill17-0768, by creating this new category would violate the Home Rule Act's provisions stating that the Mayor has the sole right to define and classify employment with the District of Columbia. The bill would also have a significant fiscal impact that is not currently funded in the District's FY 2009 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, nor is it accompanied by a valid fiscal impact statement.

The "Paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician Transfer Amendment Act of 2008" must provide the framework necessary to continue the implementation of the EMS Task Force Recommendations. In its current form, the bill actively blocks forward progress towards continued EMS improvement and reform. I respectfully urge the Council to table the bill in order that it can be modified to ensure progress towards our goal of a world class unified, all hazards agency.

Respectfully submitted for consideration,

Dennis L. Rubin

Dennis L. Rubin
Fire and EMS Chief