

# Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B



## RESOLUTION #4B-25-0402 Opposing DC Council's Emergency Legislation to Close Meetings Adopted April 28, 2025

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- Chairman Mendelson introduced [B26-0199](#), the Open Meetings Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2025, [B26-0200](#), the Open Meetings Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2025 and [PR26-0156](#), The Open Meetings Clarification Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2025 on March 28, 2025.
- The purpose of each piece of legislation is to “declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the Open Meetings Act of 2010 to (1) clarify the definition of “meeting”; (2) to provide for a public body’s ability to be briefed about potential terrorist or public health threats so long as no official action is taken; (3) to exempt from the act meetings between the Council and the Mayor provided that no official action is taken at such meetings; and (4) to provide that a meeting shall be deemed open to the public if the public body takes steps reasonably calculated to allow the public to view or hear the meeting while the meeting is taking place, or, if doing so is not technologically feasible, as soon thereafter as reasonably practicable.”<sup>1</sup>
- The [D.C. Code](#) generally mandates that meetings be open to the public, allowing closures only under specific conditions, and the proposed emergency legislation would expand these conditions in a manner that undermines government accountability. See D.C. Code § 2-575.
- [Emergency legislation](#) in the District of Columbia is intended to address urgent situations requiring immediate action, but bypasses the standard legislative process, including committee referrals and multiple readings, and becomes effective for no more than 90 days without congressional review.

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<sup>1</sup> [Council of the District of Columbia Emergency Declaration | Open DC](#)

- Open meetings ensure that residents can hold elected officials accountable and engage in policymaking decisions that directly impact their communities, and the DC Open Meetings Act requires public [notice](#) of meetings at least 48 hours or two business days in advance. See D.C. Code § 2-576.
- The District’s Open Government Coalition, called the proposed changes “a substantial threat to the right of D.C. residents to see and hear about what their government is doing...and is overly broad.”<sup>2</sup>
- Reducing government transparency through emergency legislation would severely limit public trust and weaken the ability of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) to advocate effectively on behalf of their constituents.
- The residents of ANC 4B, Ward 4 and across the District deserve an open, accountable, and participatory government that prioritizes transparency and public access.

**RESOLVED:**

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B strongly opposes the DC Council’s emergency legislation to close government meetings and urges the Council to maintain full transparency in accordance with the principles of good governance.
- ANC 4B calls on the Council of DC to require the Office of Open Government or the Open Government Coalition to review a written request 72 hours before any meeting can be closed to the public, followed by a written public explanation before and after a meeting is closed, including a summary of what was discussed, redacted minutes or transcript and why it needed to be private.
- The Commissions mandates that ANCs receive written notice 48 hours in advance of any closed meetings related to matters affecting their jurisdiction and allow representatives to attend closed meetings, in a non-voting capacity, to ensure hyper local concerns are considered.
- The Commission recommends that any permanent legislation amending the DC Code regarding open meeting requirements clearly define the specific, narrow circumstances under which a meeting can be closed (e.g., sensitive legal matters, personnel decisions, public safety threats), prohibits broad or vague reasons such as “administrative discretion” or “sensitive discussions” as justifications for closed meetings and require a minimum of 72 hours’ notice before any government body can close a meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> [D.C. Council to vote on measure to close some meetings to the public - The Washington Post](#)

**FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the Commission designates Commissioner Tiffani Nichole Johnson, ANC 4B06, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered in any way associated with the Commission.

**ADOPTED** by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was April 28, 2025, by a vote of \_\_ yes, \_\_ no, \_\_ abstentions.