



October 5, 2022

**Testimony of the DC Chamber of Commerce on bill 24-0949
The “Booting and Impoundment Reform Amendment Act of 2022”.**

Greetings Chairman Cheh, Councilmembers, and staff. My name is Brett Allen, and I am the Director of Government Relations and Public Policy of the DC Chamber of Commerce. As the leading business organization in the Washington Metro Region, the Chamber serves a diverse membership of over 1,100 businesses. Our mission has always been to be the most valuable resource and leading advocate for businesses throughout the District of Columbia and our vision is to create a vibrant, thriving economy that improves the quality of life for all in the District, establishing mutually beneficial partnerships between business, government, and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the member companies to raise concerns regarding B24-949, the ““Booting and Impoundment Reform Amendment Act of 2022”.

For the last few years now, many of our businesses have been forced to adjust to the new reality that far fewer workers who used to commute on a daily basis into the central business district and other commercial sectors within the District are no longer doing so. There are few sectors more directly impacted by this trend than our parking businesses, who have struggled to hold on to staff and even keep their lots open.

Like other day-in and day-out local businesses, parking lots may not at first glance seem all that critical to our local economy, but they are an essential element in our efforts to help revive our city, especially the central business district. They help to support our tourism, restaurants, and our entertainment venues, as well as our local hospitals and universities; in short, they play a critical role in helping to bring people back into the District. In the context

of the legislation we are considering today, it is critical that we carefully consider obstacles that may impede our ability to achieve this goal.

In the limited time I have before you today, I would like to point out just a few of our concerns about the bill.

First, this legislation imposes a number of new and unusual burdens on the parking industry. At a time when parking companies are adopting innovative measures to reduce costs through the adoption of attendant-less or cashless parking facilities, the pending bill would force companies to move in the opposite direction, with a host of requirements that would drive up costs that would in all likelihood be passed on to consumers.

Second, the bill seeks to deputize parking employees to do the work that should be carried out by the public sector. For example, section 6(A) mandates that the owner of a parking lot, collect and submit to the government, license plate numbers and parking plan data of customers who park in their facilities. With still far too few people returning to our vital commercial corridors for work, sightseeing and entertainment, we must exercise caution when imposing new burdens on businesses that provide essential services to those traveling into the city.

This bill also imposes infringements upon the privacy rights of DC drivers, by requiring parking companies to turn over the names and other personally identifiable information of their parking customers to the government. This practice could lead to unintended consequences for our region's most vulnerable residents, including domestic abuse victims, those who are not US citizens, and all those for whom the vigilant protection of personal privacy rights are seen as essential. I will also note, this bill is silent with respect to the methodology by which this newly collected data is stored by parking companies that typically do not engage in data collecting.

Finally, on behalf of the Chamber, I would like to acknowledge that we support the worthy goals of Vision Zero. All of us can agree that we need to do more to get unsafe and reckless drivers off our streets. But this is the role properly delegated to public officials tasked with the appropriate enforcement of driving laws and regulations that are already on the books. It is not a task that can or should be placed on the shoulders of our private businesses.

In conclusion, we stand ready to work with you, Madam Chairman, and the rest of your Committee members and staff on this important topic. But we cannot support this bill.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to offer testimony. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.