



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Councilmember Bowser introduces two private health insurance reform bills to protect high-cost individuals and domestic violence victims**

**Washington, DC** – In today’s legislative session, Councilmember Muriel Bowser introduced “Ian’s Law for the District of Columbia Act” and the “Healthcare Justice for Victims of Domestic Violence Reform Act.” Both bills help to keep private health insurers honest and protect the District’s most treasured asset—it’s residents.

“Ian’s Law” represents a response to the practice of insurance companies dropping coverage for an entire class of policyholders due to one high-cost individual. The bill would require that any decision to terminate a line of policies be subject to administrative review. The bill would also mandate that seriously ill or disabled policyholders who belong to a class of policies that are legitimately discontinued still receive coverage from the insurer for at least 18 months.

The law is named after Ian Pearl. He is a victim of a debilitating form of muscular dystrophy that requires expensive, 24-hour nursing care. Ian was one of these high-cost individuals.

Councilmember Bowser said, “Ian’s insurance company covered the cost of his treatment. However, the insurance company was looking to cut costs. The company was legally barred from simply terminating his policy. Instead, the company decided to eliminate an entire class of policies. While the termination of his policy was a matter of dollars and cents for the insurance company, for Ian it was a matter of life and death.

“I believe that this law is important in order to prevent this type of conduct from occurring. As lawmakers, we must be proactive to ensure that we protect all of our residents, especially the most vulnerable.”

The “Healthcare Justice for Victims of Domestic Violence Reform Act” would prohibit insurance companies from inquiring into whether an insured person or applicant is a victim of domestic violence. Insurance companies would be prohibited from denying or limiting insurance coverage based upon an individual’s status as a victim of domestic violence.

Councilmember Bowser said, “To deny coverage to domestic abuse survivors is unacceptable. To survive domestic violence and then to lose insurance coverage is an indignity that no victim should have to face.”

Both bills have been referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

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*A native Washingtonian and former ANC commissioner, Councilmember Muriel Bowser is Chair of the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs. She is also a member of the Committees on: Economic Development, Human Services, Public Works and Transportation, and Public Safety and the Judiciary. Visit [www.murielbowser.com](http://www.murielbowser.com) for more information.*

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