July 21, 2026

The Honorable James Comer, Chair
The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Garcia:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I write in opposition to the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act (H.R. 9720).

H.R. 9720 turns the fundamental premise of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act on its head and endangers public services in D.C. Under current law, Congress can move to disapprove of a bill after it is passed by the council and signed by the Mayor. H.R. 9720 would instead require Congress to approve any new local tax or fee in order for that tax or fee to become law. This bill would severely restrict the District of Columbia's autonomy to raise and spend its tax dollars to meet the needs of its constituents, a right afforded to every other state and local government across the country without the intervention of Congress. The bill would explicitly preempt the residents of D.C. from democratically choosing to enact a new Business Activity Tax (BAT) that could raise $500 million to support public services.

The District of Columbia has consistently proven its ability to manage its own finances, as the District's financial statements received a clean audit opinion for 29 consecutive years, indicating no material misstatements or errors. In the latest financial report, D.C. finished FY 2025 with a balanced budget, fully funded trusts for retirement benefits, and a strong bond rating. To meet the unique financial challenges posed to the District from the actions of the federal government, including unprecedented federal layoffs and historic cuts to federal programs such as SNAP and Medicaid, D.C. must have all policy tools available to meet the needs of its residents.

H.R. 9720 would cause serious, structural challenges for D.C.'s budget and undermines core principles of home rule. It would impose an unnecessary, harmful and

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steep procedural hurdle to raising any new revenue for D.C. in furtherance of a partisan agenda. I urge you to vote no on the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act (H.R. 9720).

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Watson

Elizabeth S. Watson
Director of Federal Government Affairs

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