



HAWDC e-HEADLINES

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Hotel Association of Washington, D.C. Holds Its Annual Meeting:



HAWDC Members gathered at the W Washington D.C. on January 21st for its Annual Meeting and first luncheon of the year. During the meeting, Members elected the following Board Members to serve as

officer for the upcoming year: Satinder Palta, General Manager of the JW Marriott, as Chair; Sheri Swain, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Capitol, as Vice Chair; Steve Smith, General Manager of the Grand Hyatt Washington, as Second Vice Chair; and Meade Atkeson, General Manager of the W Washington D.C., as Secretary/Treasurer.

HAWDC took the opportunity to thank outgoing Chairman, Thomas Penny, General Manager at the Courtyard Marriott Convention Center for all of his hard work and dedication, not only to the Association, but to the



hospitality industry as well. As a token of appreciation, HAWDC presented Mr. Penny with a Chairman's Award. Additionally, as a symbol to Mr. Penny's stalwart commitment to workforce development and hospitality education, HAWDC has endowed an annual \$5,000 scholarship for hospitality students attending DCPS Hospitality NAF Academies. The Hotel Association of Washington, D.C. Chairman's Award for Excellence scholarship will be awarded to students going to college based on merit, leadership, field of study and community involvement.

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HAWDC thanks Councilmember Jack Evans (D-Ward 2) for providing remarks at the luncheon. Councilmember Evans spoke about HAWDC's Members' contributions to the District and the importance of the hospitality industry to the District's economy. Mayor Muriel Bowser was scheduled to be the keynote speaker, however due to inclement weather and preparing for an impending blizzard which brought an historic amount of snow to the District, she was unable to attend. HAWDC thanks Mayor Bowser for sending her Senior Advisor, Beverly Perry, to share her remarks.

HAWDC also thanks Meade Atkeson and the W Washington D.C. team for a wonderful lunch!

**Pictured above from left to right: Councilmember Jack Evans, Satinder Palta, Beverly Perry, and Solomon Keene*

**Center: Solomon Keene with outgoing Chairman Thomas Penny*

**Bottom: Councilmember Jack Evans delivering remarks to HAWDC Members at its Annual Meeting*

Ballot Initiative to Raise Minimum Wage Defeated:

As you are aware, there was an initiative seeking to place on the ballot a proposal to increase the District's minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour. Several months ago, the District's Board of Elections ruled that the initiative was legally sufficient to be placed on the ballot in the District's November 2016 general election. HAWDC joined with other District businesses to organize and fund a legal challenge against the ballot initiative.

Last week, Judge Maurice Ross at the Superior Court of the District of Columbia ruled that the District Board of Elections was not properly constituted when it made its ruling ballot language was sufficient and met legal standards; accordingly, the Board could not certify the ballot initiative. Therefore, the ballot measure has been defeated and the language will not be put before District voters. HAWDC will continue to monitor the court's ruling as the Board of Elections attempts to appeal the Court's decision and will update Members as it receives any information.

Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015:

On January 14th, the District Council held its second hearing on Bill 21-415, the "Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015." As you are aware, the bill as written would give the District the most generous paid leave benefit program in the nation, mandating 16 weeks of paid leave for an employee to tend to a personal medical condition, the birth of a child, or take care of a sick relative. The leave would be

funded by an employer-paid payroll tax.

The purpose of last month's hearing was to hear testimony from the Jeffrey DeWitt, the District's Chief Financial Officer, and other policy experts on the economic impact of the bill. Mr. DeWitt stated that the bill as drafted "will likely exceed the taxes collected due to the high level of benefits offered" and there will be "a disparity of revenues collected and benefits paid." Several policy experts that testified also cautioned against the high costs of the program. The Council is scheduled to have a third hearing on the bill on February 11th. HAWDC has expressed its concerns regarding the negative financial implications that this bill would impose on District businesses, including our Members and will continue to meet with Councilmembers to express our concerns and urge them not to support this bill as drafted. As is customary, HAWDC will continue to monitor the bill as it works its way through the legislative process and update Members accordingly.

Allied Member Highlight:

With over 33 years of experience, Scientific Insect Control offers a full service pest control solution for the Lodging Industry - Pantry Pests, Rodents, Roaches, Bedbugs and everything in between.



Their Bedbug Proactive program was created specifically with hotels in mind. This patent pending method establishes a hostile environment for bed bugs in the unit, before they can be introduced by travelers.

Visit www.sci-insect.com or call (410) 833-3636 for more information.

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