



HAWDC e-HEADLINES

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HAWDC Vigorously Opposes Mayor Bowser's Proposed Bed Tax:

As you are aware, Mayor Bowser proposed a tax upon all hotels of \$0.80 per room or suite rental, per night ("Bed Tax") to fund the District's Office of Unified Communications' E911 Fund. This proposal would be an additional tax on top of what hotels currently contribute to the E911 Fund. HAWDC has testified at several District Council budget hearings urging the Council to delete the proposed tax. The correlation of the proposed tax and the hotel industry is murky, making the industry an illogical source for these funds. Moreover, continuously increasing the tax year after year, puts the industry at a competitive disadvantage when trying to secure bookings to our city.

The hotel industry is one of the highest taxed industries in the District by far and the occupancy tax has been increased twice in the last two consecutive years. This proposed tax will also be adjusted yearly to the Consumer Price Index; thereby increasing the tax every year by a different amount creating uncertainty in the group booking market for meeting planners.

Our industry has stepped up to the plate and partnered with the District when necessary by owning the responsibility to market our city (when all of our competitors receive marketing funds from their jurisdictions) and to help fund improvements to Metro. To look to the hotel industry to fund an agency's continuously expanding operating budget is unreasonable.

If the District wants to be a premiere global convention, tourism, and special events destination, the occupancy tax cannot be increased year after year. This causes uncertainty with meeting planners and makes the cost to stay in the District prohibitive; thereby forcing event planners to begin to look to other destinations for their convention travel needs.

Travelers to our city generate over \$7.1 billion annually for the District. Hotels, through the occupancy tax alone, support the operating expenses of the District's Convention Center; marketing expenses for Destination DC; and to help fund Metro. The remaining taxes go directly to the District's General Fund to support services for District residents. This translates to increased job opportunities for District residents, as well as assisting the District's ability to provide services.

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, May 30th:

The HAWDC Human Resource Directors Association Meeting will be held in the West Conference Room at 1201 New York Avenue NW, Washington D.C. 20005 from 9:00 am - 10:30 am. Contact [Vanessa Peters](#) to RSVP.

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The District Council is scheduled to vote on the proposed budget next week. HAWDC will continue to meet with Councilmembers to discuss our concerns regarding the negative impact that this tax could have on bookings and in turn revenue for the District and continue to urge the Council to delete this bed tax from the proposed 2020 Budget Support Act.

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District Government to Begin Tax Collection for Universal Paid Leave Act:

The District Council passed the "Universal Paid Leave Amendment Act of 2016." As such, effective July 1, 2019, any employer performing services in the District of Columbia, that also pays unemployment insurance taxes for its employees, will be required to pay paid family leave taxes. The taxes collected will be deposited into a government-run fund, to cover payments made to District employees for qualified paid leave events. Employees may begin taking leave on July 1, 2020 for the following: 1) 8 weeks for maternal/paternal leave; 2) 6 weeks family leave to care for a sick parent/grandparent; and 3) 2 weeks of leave for self-care.

On Monday, May 6th, HAWDC President & CEO Solomon Keene participated in a working group session with Council Chairman Phil Mendelson, Councilmember Elissa Silverman, Department of Employment Services (DOES) Director Unique Morris-Hughes and other industry business leaders to discuss the implementation of the Paid Leave law. The working group discussed tax collection policies, penalty timelines, and public information efforts regarding implementation specifics. Director Morris-Hughes committed to working with the business community to streamline communications and to ensure that all parties involved clearly understand the policies around this tax collection policy.

To prepare for the tax collection process, DOES is hosting a free webinar on the Paid Leave Tax and employer requirements. DOES will share updates, discuss, and answer questions on the implementation of the Paid Leave Program. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, May 22nd at 1:30 pm. Click [here](#) to register. Please contact DOES.OPFL@dc.gov if you have any questions.

HAWDC Presentation to AH&LA's Safety & Security Committee:

Last week, the American Hotel and Lodging Association ("AH&LA") held its second annual Safety Summit. The summit brought together security experts, national partners and industry leaders to share best practices, real-world experiences and exclusive updates on new training tools. Lisa Abrams, HAWDC's Vice President of Government Affairs, gave a presentation to the Safety & Security Committee and discussed HAWDC's recent work with the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency to develop a webinar to provide human trafficking prevention training to our members.

Allied Member Spotlight:

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