



November 10, 2015

**To:    The Honorable Councilmember Anita Bonds**  
*Chair, Committee on Housing & Community Development*  
**The Honorable Councilmember Jack Evans**  
*Chair, Committee on Finance & Revenue*  
**The Honorable Charles Allen**

**RE:    *Bill 21-316, “Safe at Home Act 2015”***

Dear Councilmember Bonds, Evans, Allen & members of the Council.

I am writing to you on behalf of the District of Columbia Association of REALTORS® (DCAR), representing nearly 2,600 REALTORS®, property managers, title attorneys, and other real estate professionals licensed in DC. DCAR is also a voice for many homeowners, buyers, sellers, renters and landlords. On behalf of DCAR, I would like to voice our support for Bill 21-316, “*Safe at Home Act 2015*.”

Overall, DCAR champions measures that allow property owners to make necessary improvements to their existing homes. We particularly value a diverse housing stock in the District of Columbia, and would like to see more properties with accessibility features come onto the market. Unfortunately, accessibility features may be cost preventive to seniors and our most vulnerable residents—the population which needs them the most. While our neighboring of Montgomery County provides tax credits to builders and homeowners for accessibility features, it is our understanding there is no such incentive in DC.

In light of the above, the “*Safe at Home Act*” is extremely important because it methodically encourages accessibility features be added to a home by easing the financial burden of these modifications for those of limited means. DCAR also wholly agrees with the introducers of the “*Safe at Home Act*” that the Bill’s tax credit provision (aside from the Grant Program) is warranted. REALTORS® particularly understand that the current inventory of homes with accessibility options is sparse, which inevitably limits housing options for homebuyers with impairments. The “*Safe at Home Act*’s” grant and tax incentive provisions have the potential to increase this critical housing stock, provide more housing choices for the disabled community and allow our residents to age in place more peacefully. We particularly praise the Bill’s attention to practical elements (e.g., simple application process, quick turnaround & clear definitions), which are critical to ease of implementation.

In sum, DCAR highly encourages the Council to quickly move forward the “*Safe at Home Act*.” We thank the Council for consideration of our Association’s perspective.

Sincerely,

Edward Krauze  
Chief Executive Officer