



**Government of the District of Columbia  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

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**Testimony of Randy Speck  
Supporting Gary Thompson's  
Nomination as Chair of the Board of Elections  
November 30, 2021**

Chair Allen and members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, I am Randy Speck, ANC Commissioner for ANC 3/4G03. I am testifying individually today — not on behalf of my Commission — to support the confirmation of Gary Thompson to be the Chair of the Board of Elections (PR24-0469). Gary is a stellar choice to lead the Board as it expands voting availability and implements any new voting procedures that the Council may enact.

I've known Gary since 1993, when he was a young lawyer at the Kaye Scholer law firm, where I was a partner. I worked with Gary for two years and knew then that he would be an outstanding lawyer. More importantly for this hearing, Gary

demonstrated his strong commitment to public service and his community by taking on significant pro bono work, which would be the hallmark of his legal career.

I continued to follow Gary's career as he moved on to other law firms and established a successful insurance-related litigation practice. Despite those intensive demands, he took on major pro bono cases on behalf of District residents — e.g., successfully arguing that District voters could elect the Attorney General and attempting to overturn the Congressional ban on a non-resident income tax.

Gary, his wife, Liz, and their three children also became my neighbors, living on Northampton Street only a block away. Our daughter baby sat for their kids, and Gary and Liz had dinners at our house. From this vantage point, I saw Gary's positive impact on our community. He served four terms on our ANC (2007-2013), including four years as its chair. My time on the Commission overlapped with his for two years, so I saw up close how he led significant Commission initiatives, including heading the Commission's Task Force to study and provide comments on the comprehensive rewrite of the District's zoning regulations, finally adopted in 2016. Gary remained involved even after he was no longer a commissioner, serving on the Commission's 2020 Task Force on Racism and its Racial and Social Equity Standing Committee, where he has been a strong advocate for removing the vestiges of past racist practices and was the Committee's spokesperson on equity considerations in a proposed use of the historic Military Road School exclusively for Lafayette Elementary School's pre-Kindergarten. Gary also shares his expertise as a self-taught expert on the Civil War forts that defended Washington and gives community

talks that provide insights into our hyper-local past. Gary continues to provide leadership on a broad array of issues that affect our community.

As Chair of our Commission, I have had a number of interactions with the Board of Elections and have testified before this Committee on issues that affect ANC elections. In the 2020 election cycle, the Board wrestled with many pandemic-related complications, and Board Chair Michael Bennett and Executive Director Alice Miller made a presentation to the Commission on July 13, 2020, on the steps the Board was taking in preparation for the general election. The Board and its staff were always helpful and supportive in efforts to ensure that all voters — including those at our senior retirement communities — had an opportunity to have their voices heard.

I am certain that Gary will lead the Board effectively as it faces a number of challenges for upcoming elections. The Board will need to adopt permanent procedures that accommodate more extensive use of mail-in ballots, and it may need to develop tools to implement ranked-choice voting if the Council enacts the VOICE Amendment Act of 2021 (B24-0372). Gary's collaborative management style and his sensitivity to equitable voting access will guide his work as Chair and instill confidence in our elections. I urge the Council to confirm Gary Thompson as Chair of the Board of Elections.