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Statement on Amendment to the BSA for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC – Councilmember Zachary Parker is introducing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023, co-introduced by Councilmember Matthew Frumin, intended to preserve equitable granting opportunities through the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. This amendment removes the proposed 50% cap on Awards of General Operating Support grants for organizations with operating budgets less than \$115,000.

“Organizations with smaller operating budgets would be disproportionately impacted by the 50% cap,” shared **Ward 5 Councilmember Zachary Parker**. “By limiting the cap, we expand the opportunity for smaller start-up artists and organizations—many of them Black and brown—to contribute to the District’s economic development, while also strengthening DC’s vibrant arts culture. Healthy communities are communities where creativity is invested in and nurtured. Organizations like The Capoeira Spot in Ward 5 rely on sizable grants from the Commission—grants that would be rendered impossible if the 50% cap remained across all sizes of organizations. What’s more, I look forward to working with Chairman Mendelson and my Council colleagues to speedily confirm nominees to the Commission in an effort to do everything we can to bolster the District’s arts movement.”

Executive Director of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Aaron Myers, commented on the amendment, saying, “As someone who has just come from running a small non-profit—understanding as an artist and administrator what it’s like to have a valued partner both financially and with regards to capacity building—I know that taking away the ability to have these funds would be detrimental to the impact smaller organizations can have. The vitality of this city is tied directly to the strength of some of these smaller businesses as they are deemed responsible for cultivating artists, audiences, and artisans. It is our goal and job to fund, support, and promote their work so that they remain a vital part of the city’s future.”

Reginald Van Lee, Chair of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities added, “A fair amount of research has been done on what the real needs are of organizations small and large. Just as they need money, they need capacity building. Though the budget of some organizations

may suggest that they have a smaller economic interest, their need for and their ability to consume capacity building money is much larger than their budget reveals. And so, we're delighted that we can provide that much needed capacity building funding through this amendment, helping these organizations and artists to become sustainable, long-term fixtures in DC's arts community."

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