FRESH STARTS Act
Info Session & Testimony Prep

Food in the DC Jails
Should Heal Not Harm
Who are we?

DC Greens is a Black-led, multiracial organization that uses the power of equitable food policy, education, and access to build a more just and resilient food system in our nation's capital.

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The FRESH STARTS Act of 2023 will:

- Improve nutrition standards
- Strengthen oversight and reporting of food programs and cafeteria
- Require incarcerated food workers be paid minimum wage
- Establish a Healthy Food in DC Correctional Facilities Task Force
- Improve the quality of ingredients via adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program

What is the FRESH STARTS Act?
Testimony and statements to the DC Council are not privileged. Do not share information that could incriminate you or reveal information about any ongoing criminal proceeding.
Signing Up and Submitting Written Testimony

- **Due date to sign up for Live Testimony:** July 12, 1pm
- **Due date to submit Written Testimony:** July 27, 5pm
- **Contact:** Email ([judiciary@dccouncil.gov](mailto:judiciary@dccouncil.gov)) or call (202-724-8058) Ms. Benjamin, Judiciary Committee Manager
- **Sample email:**

Dear Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety,

My name is ___ and I am writing to be added to the witness list to testify at the FRESH STARTS Act hearing on July 13th as a [public witness, or on behalf of ___ organization]. My phone number is _____. I have attached my written testimony to this email [OR] I will follow up with my written testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important legislation.
Due date for voicemails: July 27, 5pm
Phone number: 202-630-7585
Speak slowly and clearly (statement will be transcribed and made a part of the record)
State your full name and organization.
Include that you are calling about the FRESH STARTS Act
Do NOT provide an email, phone number, or other personal information in the voicemail testimony
Testimony Tips

- **Practice practice practice!**
  - Read your testimony out loud
  - Time yourself

- **In case of emergency**
  - If you get stuck or run out of time, jump straight to your most important point as your closing statement
  - You can ask the Chair for a little extra time so you can finish

- **Be ready for follow up questions**
  - Have notes ready in case you are asked for additional info
  - It’s ok to say, “I don’t know”
TALKING POINTS
LIVED EXPERIENCE

- How did the food served by the Department of Corrections affect you (or a loved one)?
- How did the food served and/or cafeteria environment make you feel physically and emotionally? Describe any lasting effects or impacts.
- Which parts of the FRESH STARTS Act speak to you the most and why?
On average, prison systems spend just $1.00–$4.50 a day feeding incarcerated people, but treating the diet-related diseases resulting from poor, unhealthy diets costs governments and taxpayers billions each year.

Nutritious food acts as preventive medicine, keeping incarcerated persons well and leading to long-term cost savings for the government and taxpayers.
Food in the DC jails cannot be considered healthy by any measurement. Meals are high in salt, sugar, and refined carbohydrates and low in nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, and quality proteins.

Research shows that just one month of eating the kind of unhealthy meals served in the DC jails can result in long-term increases in cholesterol and body fat and lead to increased risk of diet-related, chronic health issues like heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension.
Food is an important way that we communicate how we feel about others. Unhealthy and unappetizing food sends the message that the people eating it *don’t matter*.

- This message is internalized by the incarcerated people being served the food, negatively impacting their sense of dignity and self-worth.
- This idea that incarcerated people are of low or no value is then internalized by the public, which leads to greater stigmatization of those who have been incarcerated.
Black people and other people of color are disproportionately incarcerated and therefore more likely to experience food insecurity before, during, and after incarceration. As of 2022, over 90% of those incarcerated in DC were Black, while the overall population was just 45% Black.
Thank you Chairperson Pinto and the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify.

My name is ___ and I am a [returned citizen, concerned citizen, representative of ___ organization]. I am here to testify in support of the FRESH STARTS Act...

I am concerned about the state of food in the DC jails because...

To address these concerns, I would like to see the Council adopt the recommendations of the FRESH STARTS Act, including:

- Establish an independent oversight mechanism to require DOC kitchens to meet the same sanitation and safety standards of any restaurant in DC.
- Transition DOC food services to a self-operated and scratch-cooked model.
- Offering residents fresh produce with every meal.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am available to answer any questions.