



To better serve the community and bring more awareness to the Quality of Life issues that we all face, I have decided to periodically send out a new newsletter series – Issue Spotlights. This first issue focuses on noise.

Unwanted noise is a critical quality of life issue, and one that I am dedicated to work on to ensure that Washington continues to be livable as it grows and changes.

As our neighborhoods grow, thrive, and attract new businesses to our communities it is only natural that they will become noisier places. It is also natural that residents living in their homes want to do so without being unreasonably assaulted by excessive levels of noise.

Recently, Councilmember Orange introduced Bill B21-0196, commonly called the [Nightlife Regulation Amendment Act of 2015](#). This bill is under council review with a hearing scheduled for July 9th. While I agree with Mr. Orange that we need to seriously address the issue of noise in our communities, I do not agree with his approach.

The Nightlife Regulation Amendment Act of 2015 only focuses on noise coming from establishments that serve alcohol, and then proposes to put the fox in charge of the hen house to fix it.

Under the Bill restaurant, bar, tavern and nightclub owners would be required to take hourly readings and self-report any infractions to ABRA for corrective action or fines. This is not only a doomed approach to a very real issue, it also places an undue hardship on good businesses and gives bad business owners one more way to get around the law.

The Bill also doesn't address noise from other sources. For example, in Columbia Heights earlier this year residents in a [condominium attempted to remove a school's playground](#) from their building because the sound of happy children coming through their closed windows was more than some could take.

A more successful approach that I endorse, and one that is more comprehensive, is to make changes to D.C.'s building code as it relates to sound transmission. In D.C., our regulations come directly from the International Construction Code with few changes. In other words, very little thought has been put into D.C.'s construction code to ensure that new buildings and renovations in our densely populated urban environment successfully prevent sound from bleeding into neighbors' homes – yet this is the more successful approach to controlling sound and one that other jurisdictions have already embraced.

I encourage residents who care deeply about this issue to work with their community leaders and to consider testifying before the Council on July 9th.

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