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TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ROUNDTABLE ON THE "DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LEGACY"

(Attachments 1: Biographic Sheet)

TESTIMONY OF ERIC D. WILLIAMS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNS STAFFING OF THE DC GOVERNMENT AND WASHINGTON, DC.

Good Morning Mr. Chairman Orange, and Council Committee on Government Operations (Ambrose, Brazil, Patterson and Schwartz):

My name is Eric Williams. I am submitting the requested copies of this testimony for the record also a copy of my C.V. is attached. Thank you for allowing me to testify at this Roundtable discussion on the District of Columbia's Information Technology Legacy.

While I am including my C.V. with this testimony I would like to give you some background on myself and my company Information Brokers, Inc. I have engaged in the integration, design and engineering of advanced computing systems and internetworking protocols professionally for the past 12 years also participating in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). As chair of the Convergence sub-committee of the Open Systems Implementors Workshop sponsored by the National Institutes of Standards in Technology (NIST) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) I participated in the development of standards for telecommunications protocol convergence and implementation conformance at national and international levels.

In 1995 I started Information Brokers, Inc. a company that addresses the areas of internetwork security and systems administration. A prominent facet of the mission of InfoBro.com is to aid the budding African-American internet communities by providing services and a concept incubator for entities such as Black Geeks Online (BlackGeeks.net) and CA-FAM, III (InterCHANGE.org), both are non-profit organizations addressing the "digital divide."

I have spoken recently on issues of the "digital divide" and the IT Talent gap at the annual conference of the Black Human Resources Network. I also participated in briefings with top White House advisors during the Clinton Administration, concerning the issues of the "digital divide" it's manifestations and impact on business and community. I recently traveled to Kampala, Uganda to conduct workshops for the Makarere University Faculties concerning internetwork management and enterprise infrastructure deployment.

I have been contracted for the past 4 years in the capacity of internetwork policy and security expert for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In that capacity I have presented designs, policies and standards for operation of one of the governments most prominent network offerings - which includes the National Weather Service.

I am a former resident of Ward 5 Lamond-Riggs and have family that lives in those areas that are employed by the DC Government. For several years I have participated in developing technology at Hine JHS to stimulate the development of a talent pool from which the DC Government could cull individuals with the necessary skills to manage its developing IT infrastructure. Mayor Williams and Councilwoman Ambrose were in attendance at a recent gathering which illustrated some of the gains that have been made on that front.

Mr. Chairman, the gap in skills needed to manage DC IT Facilities seems to be woefully lacking. Not only does it appear that the talent pool has not been sufficiently developed but also that local companies, such as my own, are not adequately utilized to addressing some of the more pressing issues (such as web page updating) and system administration. Indeed, last year (October 16th and November 17th 2000) DC Government systems (one protected by a "firewall") were 'hacked' and defaced those systems were:

mail.dpw.dcgov.org, mail.does.dcgov.org, www.ci.washington.dc.us

I have included a sample of the defaced page with this testimony. In my attempts to contact responsible parties I received no response nor did I find proper designated contacts for such incidents. The defaced page remained, in one case, an entire day. I mention this as a 'wake up call for the Committee on Government Operations. I do not know and have not been able to determine whether the requisite policies and operational guidelines for systems security are present in the DC system. This is not a jibe at the DC governments' operational posture but it would be a sad legacy

indeed to persist with that level of exposure to malicious attack. It is only getting worse and often more malicious.

Some key aspects in addressing these types of issues are found right here in the federal sector. Many if not all of the agencies and entities are wrestling with these issues. The primary issue here is developing the levels of trust between the district government and its constituents to best leverage the new and efficient technological solutions to come.

As the District's government moves toward more technologically complex offerings it is incumbent on you to establish the required infrastructure and leverage resources in the local community to combat and inform the governments customers of the measures taken to secure the public trust. I for one am interested in whether there exists planning or implementation of a IT Computer Security incident Response capability at the DC government level. Whether outside talent has been informed of the government's needs to address these issues. I would note that the metro area has some of the most talented security professionals on the planet and you would not need to look far to find a properly qualified entity to perform policy development and security risk assessments for the IT facilities here. There is in my opinion no need to look outside of the District for that kind of talent.

Access to internetwork technologies and communications advances are key to the development of any community. Think of a community that only benefits from the use of the telegraph as opposed to the telephone or radio and not television. Each of these technologies offers it's own presentation of information and each progressed from rareness to ubiquity. This too is true of Internet and its importance in this evolutionary advance called *the information age*.

Proper deployment of technology and competition in the new economy drives the change, which we have come to know, is rapid. The area of information security and proper talent development are key to establishing a legacy in information technology that we can be proud of. I stand ready to assist in that development, however deficiencies in local telecommunication competition hinder the deployment of locally operated managed security services offerings such as mine.

It should be a priority for Government Operations to stimulate deployment of advanced telecommunication services (such as SDSL) beyond the downtown corridor to areas East of the river. Consumer grade services just won't cut it. That type of stimulation can lead to development of the required talent pool by tapping traditionally under utilized constituents which small business people are working to develop. We must all work to remove the limitations that drive only 'consumerism' and stifles the engagement of Government-to-business, Business-to-business and locally based Consumer-to-business service deployment. The potential benefits to businesses such as my own and others in the community are being limited to 'consumer only' flavored options. No matter how it is presented current technology does not satisfy the entire potential customer base. The rapid and fair solution to this difficulty and the future development of the DC IT Legacy depends on ubiquitous access modalities, it appears obvious to me and clearly I have other concerns about the deployment of these technologies. I am willing if time permits to discuss any of these issues with the commission. Thank you for your time and service.

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