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Opening Statement Rep. Danny K. Davis, Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Health Care, DC, Census and the National Archives Hearing on "The District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2010 Budget: Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability."

May 12, 2011

Thank you Chairman Gowdy, I appreciate your leadership as we delve into the critical issues under the purview of this subcommittee. I look forward to continuing our work. I want to welcome the witnesses today. Thank you for your attendance.

I want to be brief, as I believe Ms. Norton should be allowed ample opportunity to speak. I first want to congratulate the District of Columbia, as its fiscal discipline has brought it out of the era of the Financial Control Board to sound footing. But, similar to many urban areas, the District today faces the difficult strains of declining revenues and inflation. Further, the District bears the unenviable tasks of operating as a city, county, state, and a school district, but without the full taxing authority.

It is my understanding that the subject of this hearing- the DC budget, is at this stage, merely a proposal, a draft. The Mayor is currently travelling his city, hosting town hall meetings, acquiring feedback via a website- all in an effort to gather information and input from those who are affected by it - the city's residents. Also, the city council has yet to weigh in on this budget. This is clearly a local issue.

The District's budget may contain items for legitimate discussion, but not by this body. If we are truly interested in assisting the District in maintaining fiscal sustainability, this subcommittee should advance the budget autonomy necessary for the District to successfully transact its business. The federal shutdown came dangerously close to interfering with the District's ability to provide basic services, pay its bills, and to fully employ its workforce. However, budget autonomy would allow the District rights similar to most states and local governments, including the ability to plan and manage its locally collected funds and begin its fiscal year timely. We should not allow the District's special status to continue to serve as a fiscal hindrance to the District's financial success.

I now yield the remainder of my time to Representative Norton for her remarks.