**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

**Testimony on**

**Bill 21-124, the**

**“Ethics Reform Amendment Act of 2015”**

**Testimony of Robert J. Spagnoletti**

**Chairman**

**Board of Ethics and Government Accountability**

**Wednesday, July 8, 2015**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Room 120, John A. Wilson Building**

**1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW**

**Washington, D.C. 20004**

Good morning, Chairperson McDuffie and members and staff of the Committee on the Judiciary. I am Robert Spagnoletti, Chairman of the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (“BEGA”).

I am pleased to be here to offer testimony in support of Bill 21-124, the “Ethics Reform Amendment Act of 2015”, because its substantive provisions, which you outlined in your opening remarks, are based on recommendations made by BEGA in its most recent Best Practices Report.

Nevertheless, I do have comments about two provisions in the bill. First, the provision to increase the size of the Ethics Board from three to five members is no longer necessary. A similar provision was included in Title I of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Support Act of 2015, which the Council passed last week.

Second, the provision to require District government employees to disclose the commencement of outside employment to their agency heads should be revised in part. As currently drafted, the provision would require BEGA annually to publish a list of those employees who failed to make the disclosure. However, there is no practical way for BEGA independently to identify any violators. Perhaps, then, the provision could be revised to require publication of a list of those violators who come to BEGA’s attention either through their agency heads or after BEGA enforcement efforts.

 We appreciate the Committee’s work on the Bill, and we urge that the measure be passed along to the full Council. Enacting this important piece of legislation will enable BEGA to perform its statutorily mandated functions more effectively. As Councilmember Nadeau said at the time she introduced the Bill, “[t]hree years after [BEGA] was created, we have enough experience to identify loopholes that need to be closed.”

This concludes my testimony, and I am pleased to answer any questions the

 Committee may have.