



1200 G St., NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

February 15, 2012

Dear Members of the DC Council:

I am a resident of the District of Columbia and have been running my own small woman-owned business here in DC since 2004. I earned my Ph.D. in Physics in 2002 from the University of Maryland at College Park.

Through my production company, I produce science-based media for the internet and documentary films for television. This work is designed to promote science literacy among the general public. As a blind, Braille-reading entrepreneur, moreover, I rely on accessing all my needed talking books through the Adaptive Services Division of the DC Public Library. Also as a patron, I routinely make use of the computer screen reading technology and scanning/reading appliances to do research. In addition, I frequently attend their programs including the Saturday Technology Training sessions to get hands-on training on how to use new accessible technologies for the blind.

The value of the division is not limited to the technology they provide. In fact, I frequent this division of the library because of the courteous and unconditional support of its staff and its welcoming environment. The Division's supportive staff goes beyond the call of duty for their patrons. They provide in-depth reference services for my queries. I produce documentary films and often have complicated topics to research. They have helped me find not only needed materials within the library system, but also assisted in accessing resources on the Internet. Also upon request, they courteously print in Braille material for me. As one of those patrons, all of my needs have been met in a timely manner. If a title or other item is not available in their collection they will find another way of obtaining it for me. In addition to this support, moreover, I enjoy their interesting planned programs designed to inform the community of current resources, and the opportunity to socialize and network with other members of the community, and much more.

Because of all of the wonderful services I have been provided, I feel it necessary to pay it forward by mentoring blind youth in the community. I have spoken at their weekly teen after school program where I reach out to blind DC Public School students to serve as a role model. In addition, I have had the opportunity to speak about science careers with elementary age kids at the Braille Book club, a program promoting Braille literacy.

Please continue to fully fund the Adaptive Services operation. Its work is critical to empowering the community of people with disabilities.

It has been my pleasure to testify on their behalf.

Most sincerely,

Z. Aziza Baccouche, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Science Media Producer