



The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

November 11, 2021

Dear Chairman Peters,

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 51 for the second time - with unanimous Democratic support. In June, your committee held the second-ever senate hearing on S.51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act. The hearing in the HSGAC committee was an important moment in the work to achieve full representation for the residents of Washington, D.C. As statehood is critical to upholding the tenets of our democracy, we are urging you to hold a markup hearing on S.51 and pass the legislation out of committee.

For centuries, D.C. residents have lived in the shadow of our government - disenfranchised by racist institutions - without a voting voice in Congress. That 700,000 tax-paying Americans - the majority of whom are Black and Brown - do not have a say in the very government that functions in their backyard is a glaring civil rights and racial justice failure.¹

Because Washington, D.C., is not a state, Congress – the same one in which residents have no voting representation – has the final say over the District's local laws.² This has led to Congress continuously trying to override the will of the people on everything from protections for reproductive health decisions³, to appropriate qualifications for childcare workers⁴, to family vaccination decisions.⁵ Beyond these domestic policy matters, denying D.C. statehood disenfranchises the nearly 30,000 veterans living in Washington, D.C., who are unable to fully participate in the democracy they fought to defend.⁶

¹ US Census Bureau (2021, August). 2020 DEC Redistricting Data: Table P1: Race. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Population%20Total&g=0400000US11&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1&hidePreview=true>

² Council of the District of Columbia, "How a Bill Becomes Law." Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://dccouncil.us/how-a-bill-becomes-a-law/>

³ Davis, A. (2015, April 30). "House votes to strike down D.C. law banning reproductive discrimination." Washington Post. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/house-targets-dc-law-banning-reproductive-discrimination/2015/04/30/77f48dde-ef29-11e4-a55f-38924fca94f9_story.html?utm_term=.ecc64e4565ae

⁴ Austeruhle, M. (2021, March 4). "Two Republicans introduce bill to overturn D.C.'s education requirements for child care workers." DCist. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://dcist.com/story/21/03/04/republicans-congress-overturn-local-education-requirements-for-child-care-workers/>

⁵ Davidson, L. (2021, February 9). "Utah Sen. Mike Lee seeks to block D.C. effort to allow kids to obtain vaccines without parents' consent." Salt Lake Tribune. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2021/02/09/utah-sen-mike-lee-seeks/>

⁶ Office of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. (2020, November 9). "Norton Introduces Resolution Honoring D.C. Veterans Who Served Their Nation Despite Being Denied Full Voting Representation in Congress and Home Rule." [Press release]. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-introduces-resolution-honoring-dc-veterans-who-served-their-0>

(residents of Washington, D.C. have fought and died in every single war that this nation has waged, with roughly 5,000 men and women in uniform from the nation's capital having paid the ultimate price and sacrificed their lives for this nation).



The January 6 attack on the Capitol, as well as the delayed response and lack of protections from law enforcement, highlighted the ramifications that a lack of statehood has on the residents of the District. As testimony presented to the Senate in its investigation of the attack proved, D.C.'s lack of autonomy played a central role in the significant delay of the deployment of the National Guard. The failures of that day thrust the need for statehood into an even harsher light. As threats continue to be aimed at Washington, D.C., the ability for the local government to protect its residents is an even more pressing priority.^{7,8,9}

Support for D.C. statehood has reached historic levels. The hearing on June 22, 2021, under your bold leadership, was a landmark moment for the possibility of D.C. statehood and we greatly appreciate having your support. But, in order for our democracy to be fully representative, we must work together to make statehood a reality for the District's 700,000 residents. As such, we now ask you to continue fulfilling your responsibilities as chairman of the HSGAC committee and hold a markup on this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

20/20 Vision DC
350 Butte County
51 for 51
A Little Piece Of Light
ACLU of Michigan
AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 20
American Citizens for Justice, Inc.
American Family Voices
American Muslim Civil Rights Center
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Anacostia Coordinating Council
Asian Youth for Civic Engagement
Bend the Arc Social Action: Greater Ann Arbor
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Blue Future
Blue Wave Postcard Movement

⁷ Grisales, C. (2021, September 16). Capitol Police Prepare Will Face it's Biggest Security Test Since Jan. 6 on Saturday. NPR. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/16/1037508166/the-capitol-faces-its-biggest-security-test-since-jan-6-on-saturday>

⁸ Cochrane, E. and Cramer, M. (2021, August 19). Man Surrenders to Capitol Police After 'Bomb Threat' Near Library of Congress. New York Times. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/19/us/library-of-congress-evacuation.html>

⁹ United States Capitol Police. (2021, September 13). USCP Officers Arrest California Man with Bayonet & Machete. Retrieved 17 September 2021, from <https://www.uscp.gov/media-center/press-releases/uscp-officers-arrest-california-man-bayonet-machete>



Broward for Progress
Center for Common Ground
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Change the Chamber*Lobby for Climate
Clean Elections Texas
Common Defense
DC Democratic State Committee
DC Environmental Network
DC For Democracy
DC Statehood Coalition
DC Vote
DC Young Democrats
Declaration for American Democracy
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Justice
DemCast USA
Demos
Detroit Action
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Earth Action, Inc
Endangered Species Coalition
Equal Citizens
Fair Fight Action
Faith for Black Lives
Fix Democracy First
Food & Water Watch
Future Coalition
Georgetown Students for D.C. Statehood
Grounded Solutions Network
Herd on the Hill
Howard Chapter, Students for D.C. Statehood
HUBZone Contractors National Council Inc
Indivisible
Indivisible Chicago Alliance
Indivisible Huron Valley
Indivisible Livingston county
Indivisible Marin
Indivisible Northern Nevada
Indivisible Sonoma County
Indivisible: Narberth and Beyond



Jewish Democratic Council of America
Kindling
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
League of Women Voters of the United States
LULAC District of Columbia
Make It Plain
March On
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO
Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund
Modern Military Association of America
National Action Network
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Independent Living
National Youth Employment
Neighbors United for DC Statehood
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Progressive Alliance
NORML
Our Revolution
Patriotic Millionaires
People's Action
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pride at Work
Progressive Democrats of America-Virginia
Public Citizen
Rachel Carson Council
RepresentUs New Mexico
Rock the Vote Action Fund
SEIU
Stand Up America
Stand Up! for Democracy in DC (Free DC)
Statewide Indivisible Michigan
Street Pictures
Students for D.C. Statehood
The ACLU of the District of Columbia
The Alliance for the Great Lakes
The American Civil Liberties Union
The Washington DC Branch of the American Association of University of Women (AAUW)
The Workers Circle



Union of Concerned Scientists
Unitarian Universalist Association
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Voices for Progress
Vote.org
Women of Michigan Action Network
Women's March Ann Arbor