WHEREAS, The people living on the land that would eventually be designated as the District of Columbia were provided the right to vote for representation in Congress when the United States Constitution was ratified in 1788; and

WHEREAS, The passage of the Organic Act of 1801 placed the District of Columbia under the exclusive authority of the United States Congress and abolished residents right to vote for members of Congress and the President and Vice President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Residents of the District of Columbia were granted the right to vote for the President and Vice President through passage of the Twenty-Third Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1961; and

WHEREAS, As of 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau data estimates that the District of Columbia’s population at approximately 712,000 residents is comparable to the populations of Wyoming (582,000), Vermont (623,000), Alaska (731,000), and North Dakota (765,000); and

WHEREAS, Residents of the District of Columbia share all the responsibilities of United States citizenship, including paying more federal taxes than residents of 22 states, service on federal juries, and defending the United States as members of the United States armed forces in every war since the War for Independence, yet they are denied full representation in Congress; and

WHEREAS, The residents of the District of Columbia themselves have endorsed statehood for the District of Columbia and passed a District-wide referendum on November 8,
2016, which favored statehood by 86 percent; and

WHEREAS, No other democratic nation denies the right of self-government, including participation in its national legislature, to the residents of its capital; and

WHEREAS, The residents of the District of Columbia lack full democracy, equality, and citizenship enjoyed by the residents of the 50 states; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress has repeatedly interfered with the District of Columbia’s limited self-government by enacting laws that affect the District of Columbia’s expenditure of its locally raised tax revenue, including barring the usage of locally raised revenue, thus violating the fundamental principle that states and local governments are best suited to enact legislation that represents the will of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Although the District of Columbia has passed consecutive balanced budgets since FY1997, it still faces the possibility of being shut down yearly because of Congressional deliberations over the federal budget; and

WHEREAS, District of Columbia Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Delaware U.S. Senator Tom Carper introduced in the 117th Congress H.R. 51, which had historically passed the House on June 26, 2020, during the 116th Congress, and S. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act, that provides that the State of Washington, D.C. would have all the rights of citizenship as taxpaying American citizens, including two Senators and at least one House member; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Human Rights Committee has called on the United States Congress to address the District of Columbia’s lack of political equality, and the Organization of American States has declared the disenfranchisement of the District of Columbia residents a violation of its charter agreement, to which the United States is a signatory; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby supports admitting Washington, D.C. into the Union as a State of the United States of America; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, Senator Jack Reed, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Representative James Langevin, Representative David Cicilline, and the President of Students for D.C. Statehood.