

2021 -- S 0751

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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SENATE RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION GRANTING STATEHOOD TO THE PEOPLE OF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Introduced By: Senator Bridget Valverde

Date Introduced: March 30, 2021

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

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

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

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

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

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

18           WHEREAS, The residents of the District of Columbia themselves have endorsed  
19 statehood for the District of Columbia and passed a District-wide referendum on November 8,

1 2016, which favored statehood by 86 percent; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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