

HOUSE RESOLUTION 23

(By Delegates Thompson, Griffith, Barach, Young
and Pushkin)

[Introduced April 7, 2021; Referred to the Committee
on the Judiciary then Rules]

Urging members of the United States Congress to enact federal legislation granting statehood to the people of Washington, D.C.

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 6%; 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 repeatedly has 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 their 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 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; therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates:

That the State of West Virginia supports admitting Washington, D.C. into the Union as a state of the United States of America; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the members of the United States Congress are urged to enact federal legislation granting statehood to the people of Washington, D.C.