

DC Statehood

Voting in the District

- The District of Columbia was established in 1790 and formally designated the nation's capital in 1800.
- From 1802, when DC was incorporated as a city, to 1874, DC residents held local elections for municipal government (the city council), like any other town in the United States. (The mayor, however, was appointed by the US Congress).
- The 14th Amendment to the US Constitution guaranteed voting rights to naturalized citizens, including Jewish immigrant men in DC Chinese immigrants did not get this right until 1943.
- The 15th amendment to the US Constitution—in theory—gave Black men the vote. A few years later, in 1874, Congress eliminated elected government in DC The success of biracial governance during the post-Civil War period known as Reconstruction in DC triggered a backlash from white conservatives. All men in the District, regardless of race, lost their right to vote for their lawmakers. (Women, of course, did not have the right to vote in this period, either).
- After decades of organizing, Washingtonians' efforts to win back their civil rights led to the re-establishment of home rule (voting in local elections) in 1974.
- As of 2024, DC still does not have voting representation in the US Congress, as it is not a state.
- If granted statehood, DC would have a larger population than the states of Wyoming and Vermont, which have 2 senators each and several members of the House of Representatives (DC currently has zero).
- According to the Pew Foundation, DC's eligible voters are 45% Black, which would make it the state with the highest percentage of Black voters in the country. (Local comparisons: Maryland's eligible voter population is 33% Black; Virginia is 21%).



Milton S. Kronheim Sr. posing with the District of Columbia sign at a National Political Convention, likely a Democratic National Convention. Standing immediately next to the Dist. of Columbia sign are (left to right) F. Joseph "Jiggs" Donohue, a man identified as Luke Moore, and Milton S. Kronheim Sr.
Gift of the Estate of Milton S. Kronheim, Sr. Capital Jewish Museum Collection

Send a Message to the US Congress: Support DC Statehood

Templates adapted from the DC Statehood Commission

Background on HR 51: The Washington DC Admission Act

In a historic vote, the House of Representatives passed the Washington DC Admission Act in 2020 and again in 2021. This legislation would shrink the actual capital to encompass a small complex of federal buildings, while the rest of the District would become a state. The act did not have the necessary votes to pass the Senate. DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton has reintroduced HR 51 in the 2023-2024 Congress, but it has not yet been put to a vote.

Take Action! Write to Congress.

Your congresspeople were elected to represent you, and their job is to take their constituents' needs and wishes into account. By writing to Congress, you can make it known that an issue is important to you. Among the thousands of emails that government officials receive, taking the time to write a physical letter especially stands out.

Use the flip side of this page to learn more about who is co-sponsoring the Washington DC Admission Act and choose a template.



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Write a letter to Congress in support of the Washington DC Admission Act. If they are already a cosponsor, thank them and ask them to pressure their colleagues to support it. If they're not a cosponsor, tell them why they should support DC statehood. Cosponsoring a bill in Congress serves as a written commitment to its message and voting in favor of it.

DC residents should direct their letters to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Based on the information below, choose one of the color-coded templates to write your letter. **If your member of Congress is already a cosponsor, use the blue template. If they haven't cosponsored yet, use the pink template. If you live in DC, use the green template.** Make sure to emphasize any personal connection to the issue and why you support statehood. If you want, you can add your contact information at the end—you may receive a response.

Take your finished letter home with you to mail or leave it in the mailbox on the table and we will send it for you.

Who is a Cosponsor?

Senate: All Senate Democrats (plus Independent Bernie Sanders) support statehood with the exceptions of Mark Kelly (AZ), Joe Manchin (WV), and Jon Tester (MT). There are currently no Republican cosponsors of the Washington DC Admission Act. Independents Angus King (ME) and Kirsten Synema (AZ) have also not cosponsored.

House of Representatives: Support for statehood in the House is largely split along party lines, with most Democrats in favor and Republicans against.

Scan here to find who
represents you in Congress
and their contact information



Dear _____,

I am writing to thank you for cosponsoring the Washington DC Admission Act (HR 51/S.51). Because of your leadership, citizens living in the nation's capital will be able to participate in the US democratic process and have an opportunity to exercise their voice and vote.

The 2020 and 2021 House votes in support of HR 51 signaled historic levels of support for DC statehood, and it is crucial that our lawmakers continue to capitalize on this momentum. I hope that you will keep pushing for statehood and encourage your colleagues who have not cosponsored the bill to do so.

I support DC statehood because...

Thank you again for standing with the residents of DC in the fight for statehood!

Sincerely,

Dear _____,

I am a taxpaying American citizen who resides in your congressional district. While I am privileged to have your representation in the halls of Congress, those in Washington DC lack any federal voting representation. I feel that this is an injustice and a wrong that should be corrected.

I am writing today to urge you to support the Washington DC Admission Act (HR 51/S. 51). This legislation would make Washington, DC the 51st state and grant District residents voting representation in Congress. DC currently has over 700,000 residents who pay federal taxes and serve in the military. However, unlike anywhere else in the country, these Americans are unable to exercise the full benefits of citizenship.

I believe in DC statehood because...

The time to do the right thing is now. I hope the Americans living in Washington, DC can count on your support and courage. I urge you to co-sponsor the Washington, DC Admission Act so that the citizens of Washington DC can enjoy the rights and privileges as other taxpaying American citizens.

Sincerely,

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer,

I am a Washington, DC resident writing to thank you for cosponsoring the Washington DC Admission Act (HR 51/S.51). Because of your leadership, citizens living in the nation's capital will be able to participate in the US democratic process and have an opportunity to exercise their voice and vote.

The 2020 and 2021 House votes in support of HR 51 signaled historic levels of support for DC statehood, and it is crucial that our lawmakers continue to capitalize on this momentum. I urge you to make DC statehood a Senate priority, and encourage your colleagues who have not cosponsored the Washington DC Admission Act to do so.

As a DC resident, statehood is particularly important to me. I support DC statehood because...

Thank you again for your support. I hope that you will continue to stand with the residents of DC by making statehood a Senate priority.

Sincerely,