

February 7, 2023

Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Cc: Members of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate

Dear Congressional Leadership:

Congress Should Stay Out of the District of Columbia's Local Affairs

We, the undersigned organizations, representing millions of Americans from across the country, are concerned about the numerous measures that have been introduced that will unjustly undermine critical local decisions made by the people of the District of Columbia and their elected leadership. These local laws were enacted to address important local concerns, most notably criminal justice reform, reproductive freedom, democracy and equal treatment under the law. Efforts by members of Congress to impose legislative “riders” or pass disapproval resolutions usurp the prerogative of the District of Columbia’s elected mayor and council and the residents they represent.

We also urge Congress to refrain from taking action that could threaten the District’s Local Budget Autonomy Act. The Act allows the District to spend local tax dollars based on its local budget at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The DC Superior Court has ruled the Act is valid, and the DC Council and mayor are proceeding with the District’s local budget in accordance with the law.

We understand that some in Congress are still seeking to use the legislative process to impose policy riders upon the people of the District. The undersigned organizations advocate on diverse issues and are united in our opposition to the inclusion of any legislative vehicle that overrides, limits or otherwise usurps locally elected decision-making by the District of Columbia.

Already, in just the first month of the new Congress, legislators have promised or introduced measures that takes away the fundamental right to self-governance from the people of Washington, DC.

Congressional interference in these local matters is unfair and intolerable.

Right now, Americans are debating important issues in communities throughout this country. **But what is not up for debate is who gets to decide these questions. DC’s locally-elected leadership should decide what is best for the people of the District of Columbia.**

The Mayor of the District of Columbia and the DC Council were elected by DC residents to represent their interests. Congress does not impose its views on any other local jurisdiction, and Americans in DC have no vote in the Congress to cast against this egregious and increasingly relentless attack on their local democracy. We expect Congress to be consistent by letting District residents manage their own affairs without interference or meddling.

We urge you to respect local autonomy and oppose any efforts that seek to force Congress’ views upon DC residents.

Sincerely,

DC Vote
51 for 51
ACLU
ACLU of DC
All Souls Church Unitarian
American Family Voices
American Federation of Government Employees
Anacostia Coordinating Council
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Better Organizing to Win Legalization
Black Voters Matter Fund
Blue Future
Capital Stonewall Democrats
Center for Common Ground
Center for Popular Democracy
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
(CREW)
Clean Elections Texas
Clean Water Action
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Cause
Common Defense
D.C. Affairs Community of the District of Columbia
Bar*
DC Committee to Build a Better Restaurant Industry
DC Democratic State Committee
DC Developmental Disabilities Council
DC Environmental Network
DC Fiscal Policy Institute
DC for Democracy
DC Jobs With Justice
DC League of Women Voters
DC Marijuana Justice
DC Statehood Coalition
DC Statehood Green Party
Death with Dignity
Defending Rights & Dissent
Democracy for America Advocacy Fund
Democratic Messaging Project
Drug Policy Alliance
East Area Progressive Democrats (EAPD)
Economic Policy Institute
End Citizens United//Let America Vote Action Fund
FairVote
Family Values @ Work
Federation of Community Associations
Friends of the Earth U.S.
GLAA
GLSEN
Greenpeace USA

Harriet's Wildest Dreams
Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University
HIPS
Human Rights Campaign
In Our Own Voice
Indivisible
Indivisible Chicago Alliance
Indivisible Marin
Indivisible MN03
Indivisible Northern Nevada
Indivisible Santa Fe
Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society
Justice Policy Institute
Lake Research Partners
Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG)
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legacy DC
LONG LIVE GOGO
Love Huntsville
Metro Washington Council, AFL-CIO
More Than Our Crimes
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
Neighbors United for DC Statehood
Netroots Nation
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Northridge Indivisible
Oregonizers
Our Revolution
Peace Action
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC
Plymouth Area Indivisible
Progressive Democrats Of America
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
Rachel Carson Council
SEIU
SEIU 32BJ
Sojourners
SPACES In Action
Stand Up America

Statehood4DC
Take on Wall Street, a project of Americans for
Financial Reform
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human
Rights
The Workers Circle
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church
Ministries
United Democratic Women
United Nations Association of National Capital Area
Venice Resistance
Veterans United for DC Statehood
Voices for Progress
Voto Latino
Washington AIDS Partnership
Washington Parks & People
Washington, D.C. Lawyer Chapter of the American
Constitution Society
Who Speaks For Me?
Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia

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