



March 31, 2023

To: Members of Congress

From: Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO, League of Women Voters of the United States

Re: Support DC Statehood

Congress took a momentous step forward last session when S51 and HR51, the *Washington, DC Admission Act*, gained record-breaking support for DC statehood.

District residents have lived in the shadow of the Capitol Building, the shrine of American democracy, for centuries, without a voting voice in Congress. Without statehood for Washington, DC, we cannot claim to live in a representative democracy. We urge you to support DC statehood.

The lack of statehood for the District of Columbia disenfranchises the people of Washington, DC, creating a civil rights and racial justice failure. The District has just one non-voting delegate to the US House of Representatives and no members in the Senate. Lack of representation for the 700,000 people who call the nation's capital home – the majority of whom are Black or brown – gives the US the unfortunate distinction of being the only democracy in the world that denies the residents of its capital city the full rights of citizenship.

DC residents want statehood, and they made their position clear during a 2016 referendum, with 86% voting in favor of DC becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> state.

Congress – the same legislative body in which district residents have no voting representation – has the final say over the District's local laws. This has led to Congress using the District's laws as bargaining chips in legislative negotiations. Members of Congress have overridden the will of the people of DC on numerous issues, most recently voting to overturn a new DC criminal code. It is time for Congress to grant statehood to DC, not make arbitrary decisions to overhaul local decisions by the DC Council.

This fight for DC statehood insists that there should be “no taxation without representation,” the principle on which our country was founded. The people of Washington, DC pay more federal taxes than 23 states and more in federal taxes per capita than any other state. Yet by virtue of where they live, they have no voice in our federal government.

We believe DC statehood is critical to our democracy, and support for DC statehood means allowing the people of DC to be fully represented and have their voices heard. We stand with the residents of Washington, DC in their quest for statehood as we continue to advocate for all American voters, regardless of their zip code. We urge you to support DC's fight for equal representation through statehood and move us one step closer to actualizing our goal of a government for, of, and by the people.