



An Open Letter Supporting a Free DC and Marking One Year of Occupation

August 11, 2026

To the US Congress, the Nation's Governors, and the People of the World:

The capital of the United States, Washington, D.C. has been under military and federal surge force occupation for one year. Since August 2025, the Trump administration has deployed, at times, more than 5,000 armed National Guard troops onto the streets of the nation's capital, with the complicity of dozens of Governors who command those troops. This deployment costs American taxpayers up to \$3 million per day, according to the Congressional Budget Office.¹ The Niskanen Center² and the Center for American Progress³ have confirmed the military occupation produces no reduction in violent crime.

The human cost runs deep. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement have carried out over 20,000⁴ extrajudicial immigration arrests in the region, and federal agents have arrested 13,000 additional individuals in DC alone.⁵ The Brookings Institution estimates that nearly 7 of every 1,000 children in DC have had their parents detained and/or deported.⁶ National Guard troops have detained and assaulted individuals in parks, on transit, and even on their private property. At the hands of armed federal agents, people in DC have been shot at, flash grenaded at traffic stops, tased at a bus stop, and paralyzed from a high speed chase. Federal agents have also killed two parents in DC: On February 11, 2026, U.S. Marshals shot and killed Julian Bailey in DC's Mayfair neighborhood. On June 20, 2026, a U.S. Park Police high-speed pursuit killed Nolberto Meza in Woodley Park. The "DC Safe and Beautiful Task Force" that operates these forces has offered no accountability and no apology for their killings

¹ NPR, (2026, July 14). "[Trump's National Guard deployment in D.C. has been extended until 2029.](#)"

² Niskanen Center (2026, May 28). [Washington DC crime decline and its lessons for American policing.](#)

³ Center for American Progress. (2026, July 13). "[The Trump Administration's \\$1.7 Billion National Guard Deployments Fail To Reduce Urban Crime.](#)"

⁴ *The Washington Post*. (2026, April 6). [ICE Arrests Reach Nearly 20,000 in Trump's Second Term.](#)

⁵ U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. (2026, June 8). "[D.C. Safe & Beautiful Task Force.](#)"

⁶ The Brookings Institution. (2026, May 18). "[The administration has detained 400,000 immigrants: What do we know about their children?](#)"

and kidnappings. Local laws limiting vehicular pursuits or requiring body worn cameras carry no weight when federal forces act as an occupying army.

In addition to the military occupation, the current House of Representatives has attacked DC Home Rule, as established in 1974, with unprecedented severity and complete disregard for the well being or the wishes of the people of the District of Columbia.⁷ The Trump administration has also made open threats against Janeese Lewis George, the Democratic nominee and presumptive incoming Mayor of Washington, D.C.⁸ The voters of DC chose their leaders in an election. The President of the United States has no say in the matter because he is not registered to vote in DC. Nonetheless, the administration has made threats and has signaled its intent to maintain a military occupation through January 2029⁹ — a declaration that amounts to a confession that the occupation never was related to crime reduction or America's 250th celebration. Announcing that troops will be here through January of 2029 also evokes Trump's role in instigating the violent attempt to prevent the certification of the 2020 presidential election on January 6, 2021.

Recognizing that U.S. democracy is safer if the people in the capital have equal protection under the law, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 51, legislation granting D.C. statehood, in both 2020 and in 2021. That bill and its companion in the Senate preserve a federal district — including the White House, the National Mall, and the Capitol — under Congressional authority, but give the residents of DC the same rights as other citizens. Full autonomy through statehood will protect the people of the District of Columbia as well as the right to peaceably assemble in DC and petition the government for a redress of grievances. That right belongs to the people of DC, as it belongs to every American, and is currently under threat after a year of military occupation of DC.

Given this context, we, the undersigned will:

1. Oppose the military occupation of the District of Columbia and rise for full support of DC statehood as the path to self-determination and equal rights for its 700,000 residents.
2. Demand that every Governor serving as Commander in Chief of deployed National Guard troops withdraw those troops from Washington, D.C. immediately.
3. Call on every Member of Congress to honor the principle of consent of the governed and commit to not overturning or interfering with Washington, D.C.'s locally enacted laws. Congress' constitutional jurisdiction over the

⁷ The 119th Congress has introduced more than 80 bills that attack DC in some way. See a summary of them at FreeDCproject.org/Congress.

⁸ FOX 5. (2026, Jun 28). "[Trump attacks DC mayoral nominee Janeese Lewis George online.](#)"

⁹ NPR. (2026, July 14). "[Trump's National Guard deployment in D.C. has been extended until 2029.](#)"

federal enclave should not be used as an excuse to take away the authority DC has over its own affairs.

4. Urge the federal government to dismantle the "DC Safe and Beautiful Task Force" and the Joint Task Force created to operationalize it, to end the summer surge of forces in Washington, D.C., and to cease all ICE, DHS, DEA, IRS, FBI, Park Police, and other federal surge traffic checkpoints, high speed chases, and raids on homes and workplaces.
5. Encourage our communities to use their First Amendment rights in the District of Columbia to peaceably assemble and petition their government for a redress of grievances.
6. Publicly oppose any effort to prevent the seating of duly elected officials representing the District of Columbia, or any other jurisdiction, and commit our resources to ensuring that every duly elected official is sworn in and seated.

Democracy requires that the governed give their consent. The people of the District of Columbia, and the people of the United States of America, deserve nothing less.

Signed,
Free DC and:

National Organizations

Advancement Project
American Federation of Teachers
Athena Coalition
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Common Defense
Disability Culture Lab
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Democracy Renewal Group
Dream Defenders
Faith Beyond Religious Nationalism
Family Values @ Work Action
Feminist Majority Foundation
Food & Water Watch
Freedom Trainers
Free Speech For People
Greenpeace USA
Indivisible
Interfaith Alliance

Jewish Voice for Peace
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Legal Action Center
May Day Strong
Movement for Black Lives
MoveOn
National Action Network
National Education Association
National Homelessness Law Center
National Nurses Organizing Committee, National Nurses United (NNU/NNOC)
Not With Our Money
People Power United
People's Action
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Public Citizen
Rising Majority
Rogan's List
Secure Elections Network
Sunrise Movement
Union of Concerned Scientists
We Are CASA
Women's March
Zero Hour
198 methods
18 Million Rising

DC-area Organizations

32BJ SEIU
1199SEIU MD/DC
AFSCME District Council 20
AFSCME Local 1808, DC Public Library Workers
American University Rise Up
Amica Center for Immigrant Rights
Anti-Racist DC
Ayuda
Blacks in Law Enforcement
Bread for the City
Called to Justice
Capital Hill Boys Club
Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Claudia Jones School
Coalition of Labor Union Women, Metro DC Chapter
CODEPINK DC
Concerned Citizens Demanding Change
Critical Exposure
Crown Incorporated
DC Action
DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
DC Democratic State Committee
DC Young Democrats
DC Fiscal Policy Institute
DC for Democracy
DC for Palestine
DC Jobs with Justice
DC Latino Caucus
DC Statehood PAC
DC Vote
DMV Jewish Labor Bund
Empower DC
EmpowerEd
Fair Budget Coalition
Frederick Douglass Club CPUSA
Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop
Grassroots Alexandria
Greater Greater Washington
Hands Off the Arts
Harriet's Wildest Dreams
Jews United for Justice
League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia
Maryland State Education Association
MD DC Alliance for Retired Americans
Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO
Metro DC DSA
Miriam's Kitchen
More Than Our Crimes
Mothers Outreach Network
Neighbors United for DC Statehood
National Organization for Women, DC chapter
ONE DC Black Workers Center Chorus
Positive Force DC
SEIU Local 500
Solidarity Warriors

SPACeS In Action
Swing Left GWU
Takoma Park Mobilization
Task Force for Democracy
Third Act DC
Third Act DMV
Thrive Under 25 Coalition
Together for DC
T.R.I.G.G.E.R. Project
Ward 3 Democratic Committee
Ward 3 Democrats for DC Statehood
Ward 4 Democrats
Ward 8 Woods Conservancy
Washington Lawyers' Committee
Washington Teachers' Union
We Are Family Senior Outreach Network
50501 DC

Faith Leaders and Institutions

All Souls Church Unitarian (DC)
Asbury United Methodist Church (DC)
Capitol Hill United Methodist Church (DC)
Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ (DC)
CLEAR Dallas
Congregate Charlottesville
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker
Dumbarton United Methodist Church (DC)
Faith in Action National Network
The Festival Center
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, DC
Foundry United Methodist Church
Jewish Voice for Peace-DC Metro
Jews United for Justice
Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church (DC)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi USA
Rabbi Koach Baruch Frazier
Rev. Dr. Cassandra Gould
Rev. Aundreia Alexander
Rev. Neal Christie
Rev. Mark Thompson, Make It Plain

Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Uri L'Tzedek
Washington Interfaith Network

Local Elected Leaders

DC Councilmember Robert White, At Large *and* Democratic nominee for Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives
DC Councilmember Christina Henderson, At Large
DC Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At Large
DC Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau, Ward 1
DC Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4
DC Councilmember Zachary Parker, Ward 5
DC Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6

DC Shadow Senator Ankit Jain
DC Shadow Representative Dr. Oye Owolewa

Ben Williams, DC State Board of Education, Ward 1
Dr. LaJoy Johnson-Law, DC State Board of Education, Ward 8

Charles Wilson, DC Democratic State Committee, Chair
Philip Pannell, DC Democratic State Committee, National Committeeman
Sam Bonar, DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large
Samantha Davis, DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large
Jerome Hinkle, DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large
Chioma Iwuoha, DC Democratic State Committee, At Large
Lia Lake, J.D., DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large
Aliyah McNeeley, DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large *and* Vice President, DC Young Democrats
Emily Siegel, DC Democratic State Committee, At-Large
Ethan Arnheim, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 1
Alex Busbee, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 1
Ethan Arnheim, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 1
Michelle Chappell, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 1
Rachel Lesniak, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 2
Tarek Maassarani, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 3
Charles Burgess, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 4
Aaron Dickerson, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 5

Lauren Kuritz, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 6
Avram Reisman, DC Democratic Committeeman, Ward 6
Daraja Carroll, DC Democratic State Committee, Ward 6
Tyrell M. Holcomb, Ward 7 Democrats, Chair

Jaspal S. Bhatia, Commissioner, ANC 1A01
Dieter Lehmann Morales, Commissioner, ANC 1A02
Jeremy Sherman, Commissioner, ANC 1A04
Francois Barrilleaux, Commissioner, ANC 1B02
Miguel Trindade Deramo, Commissioner, ANC 1B06
Howard Bauleke, Commissioner, ANC 1C01
David Fucillo, Commissioner, ANC 1C08
Nancy Groth, Commissioner, ANC 2C02
Trupti J. Patel, Commissioner, ANC 2A03
Sean Youngstone, Commissioner, ANC 2A09
Madison Crum, Commissioner, ANC 2B04
Howard Garrett, Commissioner, ANC 2G01
Steven McCarty, Commissioner, ANC 2G04
Sheena Berry, Commissioner, ANC 2G05
Janell Pagats, Commissioner, ANC 3C03
Erin Beard, Commissioner, ANC 3C04
Chuck Elkins, Commissioner, ANC 3D01
Claudette David, Commissioner, ANC 3F04
Christen Boas Hayes, Commissioner, ANC 4C06
Eric Heller, Commissioner, ANC 4C07
Jenn Kauffman, Commissioner, ANC 4D08
Anna Roblin, Commissioner, ANC 5D03
Charquinta McCray, Commissioner, ANC 5D06
Joe Bishop-Henchman, Commissioner, ANC 5F06
Aru Sahni, Commissioner, ANC 5F02
Julia Hedlund, Commissioner, ANC 5F07
Mónica Martínez López, Commissioner, ANC 5B05
Roberta Shapiro, Commissioner, ANC 6A03
Morgan Conley, Commissioner, ANC 6A05
Bruce Levine, Commissioner, ANC 6D06
Travis R. Swanson, Commissioner, ANC 7B03
Katie Murphy, Commissioner, ANC 7D04
Ebony Payne, Commissioner, ANC 7D05

Allies in States

Bay Resistance
Chicago Teachers Union

Illinois Federation of Teachers
Arizona Jews for Justice
Arizona Education Association
Education Minnesota
Texas State Teachers Association
Wisconsin Education Association Council
Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance
Oregon PeaceWorks
Regina Romero, Tucson AZ Mayor