



Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) and undersigned individual organizations, we are writing to ask you to bring H.R. 157, the "District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act," ("DC VRA") to a vote as soon as possible. Before Congress begins to consider an economic recovery package and many other proposals that so greatly affect our nation's future, it should assure the citizens of Washington, DC and Utah that Congress is committed to giving them a fair and equal voice.

Washington, DC residents pay federal income taxes, serve on juries, and die in wars to defend American democracy, but they do not have voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives or the Senate. As we work to promote democracy around the world, we simply cannot afford to leave hundreds of thousands of our own citizens out in the cold.

In addition, since 2001, Utah residents have had their right to vote undermined. Because thousands of state residents living abroad were not counted in the 2000 census, Utah was given only three congressional districts instead of four. As a result, the votes of Utah citizens have been diluted.

The DC VRA will provide Washington, DC residents with their own voting member of the House of Representatives for the first time ever, and give Utah an additional House district through 2012. Because each party would likely gain one additional House seat under the bill, its political impact would be neutral. As you know, in 2007, the House passed a similar version of the DC VRA with bipartisan support.

The DC VRA is well within Congress' broad constitutional powers to govern the District of Columbia. Furthermore, given the principles upon which the American Revolution was fought, we believe that our Founders would never accept the "taxation without representation" of more than 500,000 Americans today.

Please help expand democracy to the residents of DC and Utah by promptly bringing the DC VRA to the House floor. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, LCCR Counsel, at (202) 466-6058.

Sincerely,

American Association for Affirmative Action
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of Teachers
American Jewish Committee

"Equality In a Free, Plural, Democratic Society"



Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.
Anacostia Coordinating Council
Anti-Defamation League
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
Asian American Justice Center
Bazon Center for Mental Health Law
Blacks in Government
Capital Area Food Bank
Center for Responsible Lending
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence
Common Cause
DC Action for Children
DC Appleseed
DC Vote
FairVote
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Women International
Laborers' International Union of North America
Latino Economic Development Corporation
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees
National Association of Human Rights Workers
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Treasury Employees Union
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
OCA
Open Society Policy Center
People For the American Way
Pride At Work
Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
U.S. Public Interest Research Group