

National Council of State Legislatures 2015 Legislative Summit  
Seattle, Washington  
Aug 3-6, 2015

Resolution to Urge U.S. Congress to Enfranchise  
District of Columbia Residents

**WHEREAS**, the United States Constitution that was ratified in 1788, provided the right to vote for representation in Congress to the “People living” on the land that would later be designated by the federal government for the nation’s capital as ceded by Maryland and Virginia to become the District of Columbia (D.C.);

**WHEREAS**, the “*District of Columbia Organic Act of 180,*” disenfranchised D.C. residents from voting for representative Members of Congress for more than 214 years; and,

**WHEREAS**, District of Columbia residents pay among the highest per capita federal taxes in the nation, and more than 200,000 D.C. residents have served in the federal armed services, and yet have no vote in the United States Congress; and,

**WHEREAS**, no other democratic nation in the world denies the right of self-government, including participation in its national legislature, to the residents of its capital; and,

**WHEREAS**, the 660,000 plus residents of the District of Columbia lack full democracy, equality, and citizenship enjoyed by the residents of the 50 states; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Congress has repeatedly interfered with the District of Columbia’s limited self-government by enacting laws on how the District of Columbia spends its locally raised tax revenue, including barring the usage of these funds to implement laws passed by the District’s duly elected legislature, and, the Congress has overturned local laws enacted through citizen referendum; and,

**WHEREAS**, federal intervention into local District matters violates the fundamental principle that states and local governments are best suited to enact legislation that represent the will of their citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, HR 317, the “*New Columbia Admission Act,*” would grant the District of Columbia budget and legislative autonomy, as well as congressional representation; and,

**WHEREAS**, although the District of Columbia has timely passed a balanced budget for each of the last 20 years, it is still treated as a Federal agency for budget purposes and faces the possibility of being shut down yearly because of Congressional deliberations over the federal budget; and,

**WHEREAS**, the residents of the District of Columbia have endorsed Statehood for the District of Columbia, and passed a District-wide referendum on budget autonomy; and,

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*WHEREAS*, it has been 50 years since the passage of the *Civil Rights Act* and 40 years since the District of Columbia was granted Home Rule, and the residents of the District of Columbia have yet to obtain the same rights as the residents of the 50 states; and,

*WHEREAS*, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has called upon the U.S. Congress to address D.C.'s lack of political equality, and the Organization of American States (OAS) has declared the disenfranchisement of District of Columbia resident's a violation of the OAS Charter agreement to which the United States is a signatory.

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, that the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to support current legislation that will provide the residents of the District of Columbia with the same rights to self-government enjoyed by all other residents of America. These measures include; legislation to grant the District local budget autonomy, legislative autonomy, and statehood.

*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED*, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the President of the United States of America, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and each member of the United States Congress.

Submitted by:  
Councilmember Anita Bonds  
Councilmember Vincent Orange  
Councilmember Charles Allen  
Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie