



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

November 2, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

As Mayor of Washington, DC, and on behalf of 700,000 Washingtonians, I want to thank you for your leadership in the Senate, especially for your co-sponsorship of S.51, The Washington, D.C. Admission Act. I urge you, however, as our Majority Leader, to seize this first-ever opportunity to have your colleagues report S. 51 out of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs so it can be sent to the Senate Floor for a vote before the 117th Congress concludes. With the companion bill having passed in the House twice, this is a historic moment, but one that awaits Senate action. The dynamics of our current political climate magnify the necessity and benefits of DC Statehood. Not only will DC Statehood fully enfranchise our residents; it will help secure American democracy. We urge your expeditious action.

We are at a troubling crossroads in America. The demand for action is being propelled because women's rights in many jurisdictions are under assault by overzealous legislators and local judges, with the specter of Congressional interference looming over us in a way that is particularly threatening to Washingtonians, as we do not have full self-determination. As voting rights are restricted and districts gerrymandered across the country to lock in advantages of those who do not support the District, we need to have our own Senators representing us.

As you are keenly aware in the Senate, Senators representing a small fraction of the population can hold up legislation desired by most of the populace. In Washington, DC for more than 220 years, it has been commonplace for government officials not elected by DC residents to overturn or constrain local policies with little regard to the resulting harm, such as regarding reproductive rights, prohibition of needle exchanges, or the establishment and regulation of an adult-use cannabis industry. Our local courts, controlled by the federal government, suffer from vacancies that we cannot remediate on our own. These are just a sample of the restrictions on self-government that our residents have faced, while at the same time paying the highest federal taxes per capita of any Americans. Matters could get even worse, with the limited self-governance enjoyed by residents for more than 50 years, known as DC's Home Rule, rumored to be up for repeal should leadership change in the Congress.

For these reasons, I urge you and your colleagues to place DC Statehood on the Senate floor for a vote before the end of the year. This is a unique opportunity to right the wrong that has existed for more than two centuries—I will follow up with you in the coming days. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or have your staff contact my Senior Advisor, Beverly Perry at beverly.perry@dc.gov or 202-724-7173.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Cc: The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton