

H.R. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act

The bill would admit the State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth and reduce the size of the federal district. The State would consist of 66 of the 68 square miles of the present-day federal district, known as the District of Columbia (D.C.). Congress would retain plenary authority over the two-square-mile federal district, which would consist of the White House, the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the principal federal monuments, and the federal buildings adjacent to the National Mall and the Capitol Building.

The Constitution's Admissions Clause gives Congress the authority to admit new states, and all 37 new states were admitted by simple legislation. The Constitution's District Clause gives Congress plenary authority over the federal district and establishes a maximum size of the federal district (100 square miles), but not a minimum size. Congress previously reduced the size of the federal district, including by 30 percent in 1846. The 23rd Amendment, which allows the federal district to participate in the Electoral College, does not establish a minimum size of the federal district.

Facts:

The United States is the only democratic country that denies both voting representation in its national legislature and full local self-government to the residents of its capital.

D.C. pays more in federal taxes than 21 states and pays more in federal taxes per capita than any state.

D.C.'s population (712,000) is larger than the populations of Wyoming and Vermont, and six states had populations under one million in the last census.

D.C.'s budget is larger than the budgets of 12 states, and D.C.'s bond rating (triple-A) is higher than the ratings of 32 states.

D.C. has a higher per capita personal income than any state and a larger gross domestic product than 17 states.

D.C. residents have fought in every American war, including the Revolutionary War. Approximately 30,000 veterans live in D.C.