



March 19, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chair
Oversight and Governmental Reform Cmte.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member
Oversight and Governmental Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Maloney and Ranking Member Comer,

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice applauds House consideration of the Washington D.C. Admission Act (H.R. 51). H.R. 51 is a vital piece of legislation that will finally give equal representation to the more than 706,000 people (including many of our staff) who call Washington D.C. their home.

Voting representation is the foundation of our democracy and it is past time to extend it to the people of D.C. Even with the passage of the 15th Amendment and the success of the women's suffrage and Civil Rights movements, District of Columbia residents have remained disenfranchised from voting since its establishment. Today DC residents (a population the size of Vermont) are stripped of their most fundamental right to vote. Our nation cannot proclaim to be the world's strongest democracy when we deny hundreds of thousands of people political representation simply because of their zip code.

With a majority Black and brown population, the fight for D.C. Statehood cannot be separated from the struggle for racial justice in our nation. The lack of voting representation for D.C. residents is part of the harmful national heritage of racial injustice. Our government cannot continue to bar arbitrarily the exercise of the fundamental, constitutional rights of our fellow citizens living in the District. It is wrong to justify the status quo based on party politics or the historical precedent of preventing Black and brown people from voting.

As people of faith, we believe that it is every citizen's right and responsibility to participate in the political process as an expression of their inherent dignity. Our nation was founded on the principle of self-governance, but the people of D.C. do not have control over their own laws or their own budget. Residents of the District must no longer be denied this sacred right and responsibility—it is time for Congress to act.

Our status quo maintains that these Americans are not worthy of fully participating in our democracy. Passage of this bill could bring us closer to achieving the ideals articulated in our founding documents.

Sincerely,

Sr. Simone Campbell, Executive Director
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

cc: Members of the House Oversight and Government Reforms Committee