

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify **in support** of SCR 4009, a resolution urging Congress to support the admission of Washington, DC, into the Union as a state of the United States. My name is Jayme Epstein and I am a proud resident of Washington, DC.

I moved to the District in 1983 to attend law school at the Georgetown University Law Center. I had lived in Northern Virginia for part of my childhood and always dreamed of returning to DC as an adult, both for the opportunity to serve in the government or one of the many public service organizations based in DC and because of the city's numerous parks, including the National Mall, its rich history, and the wonderful (and mostly free!) cultural opportunities, from the Smithsonian Museums, to the National Gallery, to the Kennedy Center, and of course the local cultural community.

DC is made up of many, many neighborhoods, each with their own unique footprint, shops, restaurants, and culture. I currently live in Woodley Park, adjacent to the beautiful nature trails of Rock Creek Park and halfway between the National Zoo and the vibrant community of Adams Morgan, with its numerous restaurants and my two favorite book stores. I live in a rowhouse on a beautiful tree-lined block whose neighbors enjoy gathering for holidays and just chatting on their porches. I can walk a short distance for just about everything I need. And I take advantage of the metrorail and bus system to get almost everywhere in the city I serve as a volunteer, primarily as an adult educator and tutor and as an advocate for District programs and policies that advance and support the interests of our most vulnerable communities.

The *only* thing I miss about living in a state is the right to democratic representation and local governance (without federal interference) that the residents of North Dakota and every other state in the Union enjoy. I am, therefore, urging you to vote yes on SCR 4009 in support of full democratic representation for the 700,000 people who call DC home.

Currently, my neighbors and I have no say in federal laws, policies, and programs and no one to champion our interests in debates over national priorities. In addition, **our local government is at constant risk of interference from federal lawmakers**. Without statehood, DC's power over issues like our local schools, health care, senior services,

and other key programs is at constant risk of interference from members of Congress who we did not elect and who are not knowledgeable about the lives and needs of our community. This is an immediate danger to our communities and one which can only be permanently addressed through statehood.

Correcting DC's lack of representation and autonomy is an issue of justice, and as a DC resident I encourage you to be in solidarity with communities here and vote "yes" on SCR 4009.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter and the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Jayme Epstein