



February 19, 2025

The John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite C09  
Washington, D.C. 20004

North Dakota Legislative Council  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Subject: Support for SCR-4009 – Urging Congress to Admit Washington, D.C. as a State

Dear North Dakota Legislative Council:

On behalf of District of Columbia residents, as U.S. Senator for the District of Columbia (non-voting), I am writing to express my strong support for SCR-4009, a concurrent resolution urging Congress to support the admission of Washington, D.C., into the Union as a state. I urge you to support and vote in favor of this legislation. D.C. statehood is a matter of great importance to D.C. residents, but also for all citizens of the nation, including those in North Dakota.

D.C. statehood is an issue of ensuring full rights and privileges to all U.S. citizens. It is an issue of striving to live up to the ideals of our founding creed and the Declaration of Independence. D.C. is home to over 700,000 residents who contribute to the well-being of country just as much as residents of any other jurisdiction. D.C. residents serve in the military, serve on juries, are subject to the Selective Service, contribute to the nation's economy, and pay federal taxes. However, D.C. residents do not have the same rights and privileges as citizens of the 50 states, including representation in the U.S. Congress.

**OFFICE OF UNITED STATES SENATOR ANKIT JAIN**

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The phrase “no taxation without representation” is a founding phrase of our country. It is one of the core grievances our Founding Fathers listed in the Declaration of Independence: “For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.” Nearly 250 years later, it is still valid for residents of D.C. Washingtonians pay more federal taxes per capita than *any* state in the nation and pay more in total taxes than 19 other states. Yet D.C. residents have no voting representation in the House of Representatives or Senate who have a say in how this tax money is spent.

D.C. statehood is not only an abstract concern of democracy; it has real consequences that impact the lives of D.C. residents. The most tangible of these is D.C.’s crime rate. In the District, the two most prominent forces in the criminal justice system answer to different executives. The Metropolitan Police Department answers to the D.C. Mayor, and the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia answers to the President of the United States. This results in poor coordination between the offices. In addition, all judges for the District must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. These judges are usually the last priority for the Senate, and the result is many vacancies, causing trials to take longer to complete in D.C. than in any other jurisdiction in the country. This system means that many criminals believe they are unlikely to be prosecuted and, therefore, are more brazen in committing crimes in the District, leading to higher crime rates. When we become a state, D.C. can take control of this system and fix the inefficiencies to reduce the crime rate and improve the lives of residents.

Since D.C. is not a state, Congress can also impose any requirement it wants on D.C. This hinders the District's autonomy and creates serious safety concerns for residents. For example, in 2014 Congress prevented the implementation of a local ballot measure that legalized the sale and use of marijuana, by using the federal budget to veto the provision allowing for the sale of marijuana but not touching the provision dealing with its use. This congressional action has led to an unregulated gray market of marijuana “gifting” shops in which customers are “gifted” marijuana after buying another item. The lack of regulation creates safety concerns as customers cannot be sure what product they will receive after purchasing it. The Metropolitan Police Department has found multiple “gifting” shops which have laced cannabis with amphetamines.<sup>1</sup> In addition, marijuana cannot be taxed and is instead treated as a free

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<sup>1</sup> Segraves, Mark. “Cannabis Laced with Amphetamines Found at Illegal DC Shops amid Crackdown.” NBC4 Washington, NBC4 Washington, 26 Sept. 2024, [www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/as-dc-shuts-down-illegal-cannabis-shops-police-say-some-sold-other-illegal-drugs/3726922/](https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/as-dc-shuts-down-illegal-cannabis-shops-police-say-some-sold-other-illegal-drugs/3726922/).

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commodity. Therefore, the District government loses millions of dollars that could come from taxing sales.

Statehood for D.C. is not only something that benefits the residents of D.C. It benefits residents of all states, as it would improve the image of the United States in the world. The United States is the only representative democracy in the world that does not give voting representation in the national legislature to citizens of its capital city. Instead, citizens in D.C. are treated more like second-class citizens or citizens of a colony. Residents of D.C. bear the responsibilities of citizenship but do not get to enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship. D.C. residents have no voting representation in either house of Congress. D.C. does have a local government, but Congress gets to dictate every law that the local government passes. And, most egregiously, on a whim, Congress has the power to remove the local government altogether. DC residents deserve the same representation as any American.

D.C. Statehood is also not a partisan issue. Across the history of the United States, both Democratic and Republican lawmakers have endorsed and advocated for statehood and voting representation for D.C. residents. Republican Delegate William Corlett of Wyoming introduced the first-ever congressional joint resolution (H.R. 57) to give D.C. voting representation in the House of Representatives.<sup>2</sup> 70 years later, in 1960, Republican Senator Kenneth Keating of New York introduced what became the 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave D.C. residents the right to vote for President. In 1973, Republican President Richard Nixon signed the District Home Rule Act into law, creating the local government that D.C. has today. In addition, the Republican Party Platform of 1960, 1968, 1972, and 1976 included support for congressional representation for D.C. residents. Finally, many notable Republican lawmakers and officials have supported Congressional voting representation for D.C., including President Dwight Eisenhower, President Richard Nixon, Vice President Mike Pence, Senator Bob Dole (1996 Republican Presidential nominee), Representative Jack Kemp (1996 Republican Vice Presidential nominee), Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

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<sup>2</sup> "Congressional Record." Congress.gov, Library of Congress, 27 Nov. 1877, <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1877/11/27/6/house-section/article/714-728>.

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I am urging the North Dakota Legislature to pass this resolution. It is time to make it clear that North Dakota agrees that D.C. residents deserve to enjoy the same rights and privileges that all American citizens share. D.C. residents deserve to have voting representation in Congress and autonomy over their own laws and agencies.

I would like to thank Senators Mather and Braunberger for introducing this resolution and leading the charge to gather support for D.C. statehood in North Dakota. Please reach out to my office for any further questions and assistance in support of SRC-4009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ankit Jain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ankit" and the last name "Jain" clearly distinguishable.

Ankit Jain

U.S. Senator for the District of Columbia

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