

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 4009, a resolution urging Congress to admit Washington, DC as a state.

My name is Mark Reichard. I have lived in the Kalorama neighborhood of DC for 16 years with my wife and son. I am an IT contractor for the FAA, working on systems that prevent plane crashes by keeping drones away from airports.

I urge you to vote "yes" on SCR 4009 to support full democratic representation for the 700,000 people who live in DC. DC has about the same population as North Dakota, yet we have no voting representation in Congress.

I work for a veteran-owned small business, and 30% of my coworkers are veterans. DC residents have served in every war, and [more than 8,000 currently serve in the U.S. military](#)—yet we have no say in whether our country goes to war. DC residents pay federal taxes, but we have no representation in decisions on how those taxes are spent.

Many people assume that DC residents move here for federal jobs, justifying taxation without representation. In reality, [fewer than 1/3 of DC residents work for the federal government](#). Most are teachers, firefighters, or bus drivers. About one-third of DC adults were born here and have lived their entire lives without the right to vote for members of Congress.

Beyond this, DC residents face the constant risk of losing even the limited self-governance we have. Congress can override our local government at any time, threatening control over schools, healthcare, senior services, and other key programs. Without statehood, our communities remain vulnerable to federal interference from politicians we did not elect.

One of the justifications used for the threat of removing home rule is the rate of violent crime in DC. **However, [violent crime in DC hit a 30 year low in 2024, giving us a per capita rate of violent crime lower than Tennessee, Alaska, Louisiana, and Arkansas](#)**. And yet, no one is talking about eliminating democratic representation in those states.

Statehood is the only permanent solution. Giving DC residents full representation strengthens democracy for everyone, including North Dakota communities. This is an issue of justice, and I urge you to vote "yes" on SCR 4009.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Reichard
Washington, DC