

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 Jessica Steele and I am a proud resident of Washington, DC.

I live in Eckington, where I help install native pollinator gardens with a local group called DC Natives. We take pride in restoring green spaces in our city.

I am urging you to vote “yes” on SCR 4009 and support full democratic representation for the 700,000 people who call DC home.

Approximately the same number of people live in DC as live in North Dakota. Yet unlike the Peace Garden State we have no voting representatives in Congress. This means we 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 also 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. This is an immediate danger to our communities and one which can only be permanently addressed through statehood.

DC residents have served in every war, and there are currently [more than 8,000 DC residents serving in the US military](#) — yet we have no say in whether our country goes to war.

DC residents pay the [highest federal taxes per capita](#) compared to any other state —yet we have no say in how the federal budget is spent.

Statehood for DC is the only solution to this problem. Strengthening democracy for DC will strengthen democracy everywhere, including for North Dakota communities. Correcting DC’s lack of representation 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 consideration of this important matter and the opportunity to testify on this incredibly important bill.

Sincerely,

Jessica Steele,
Washington DC