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The Honorable Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly
North Dakota State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Subject: In Support of SCR 4009 – Upholding Democracy and Representation for Washington, D.C.

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SCR 4009, a resolution urging Congress to grant Washington, D.C. full statehood and equal representation in our democracy.

My name is Vonetta Dumas Jennings, and I am a proud resident of Washington, D.C. Since 2011, I have called the Trinidad neighborhood in Northeast D.C. my home. Purchasing my home was one of the most significant and fulfilling decisions of my life—it has provided me with stability, a strong sense of community, and a place where I have been able to uplift not only myself but my loved ones as well. My home has been a safe haven for friends and my mother. And when I married, my husband—who moved from out of state—chose to make D.C. our permanent home because of its proximity to both of our workplaces and the business that I own and operate in the District.

Beyond being a business owner, homeowner, and engaged citizen, I also served as a Commissioner in my community, where I worked tirelessly to improve the lives of my fellow residents. During my tenure, I championed crime reduction initiatives, supported measures to address blighted properties, and pushed for responsible development that preserved the character of our community. One of my proudest achievements was advocating for a neighborhood security camera program, which later became a citywide reimbursement initiative that helps keep our communities safe.

Despite my deep investment in my city, I—and nearly 700,000 other residents of Washington, D.C.—have no voting representation in Congress.

Approximately the same number of people live in Washington, D.C. as in North Dakota. Yet, unlike the people of the Peace Garden State, we have no voting representatives in Congress. This means we have no say in federal laws, policies, and programs that directly impact our lives—and no elected officials to champion our interests in debates over national priorities.

Additionally, our local government remains uniquely vulnerable to interference from federal lawmakers who neither live here nor were elected by our people. Without statehood, Washington, D.C.'s ability to make independent decisions on critical issues such as education, healthcare, senior services, and public safety is constantly at risk. No other jurisdiction in the United States is subject to such undemocratic oversight.

Moreover:

D.C. residents have served in every war in U.S. history, and today, more than 8,000 D.C. residents serve in the U.S. military—yet we have no voice in Congress when decisions are made about war and peace.

D.C. residents pay the highest federal taxes per capita compared to any other state—yet we have no say in how our tax dollars are spent.

D.C. statehood is the only solution to this injustice. Statehood would not only strengthen democracy for Washington, D.C., but for the nation as a whole. The right to full representation and self-governance should not be dictated by geography.

I urge you to stand on the right side of history and vote “YES” on SCR 4009. By supporting this resolution, you affirm a simple but fundamental truth: every American, regardless of where they live, deserves a voice in their government.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Vonetta Dumas Jennings

Washington, D.C.