



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Eric Feldman, Senior Advisor
Purpose: Final action – vote expected
Keywords: #DCStatehood

AGENDA ITEM #4A
April 27, 2021
Action

SUBJECT

Resolution in support of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOG) Resolution supporting Statehood for the District of Columbia.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Action

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Last week, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments passed a Resolution in support of Statehood for the District of Columbia.

Over 700,000 District residents, a majority of whom are Black and other persons of color, are being denied the basic rights and privileges afforded to all other citizens, despite bearing the responsibilities such as protecting and serving our country. The residents of the District of Columbia pay more taxes than residents in 22 states and pay more per capita to the federal government than any state—yet they have no votes in the United States Congress nor can they fully self-govern.

Given the inter-connectivity with the population living and working in the District, Montgomery County will be positively impacted by the designation of statehood for the District.

This report contains:

Proposed Resolution

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METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002 RESOLUTION SUPPORTING STATEHOOD FOR THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) comprises 24 of the National Capital Region's local governments and their governing officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia is a founding member of COG and the center of the National Capital Region, and the District is the only jurisdiction in the United States that operates as a city, county, and state; and

WHEREAS, in 1788, James Madison wrote that the inhabitants of the federal district should have a “voice in the election of the government which is to exercise authority over them,” and twohundred years later, residents of the District of Columbia still lack representation in Congress and have no representation at all on matters before the Senate; and

WHEREAS, COG throughout its history has steadfastly supported the expansion of political rights for District of Columbia residents, from advocating for Home Rule, to more recent efforts to gain voting representation in Congress; and

WHEREAS, with a population of 712,000 residents, the District of Columbia exceeds the population of two states, anchors a metropolitan statistical area that is the sixth largest in the nation, and its residents pay annual federal taxes of more than \$27.5 billion – more per capita than any state and more total federal taxes than 22 states; and

WHEREAS, in November 2016, 86 percent of District of Columbia voters approved a referendum to make the District a state; and

WHEREAS, statehood for the District of Columbia impacts the entire National Capital Region, home to more than 6 million residents, with hundreds of thousands of federal government employees and contractors serving the country; and

WHEREAS, given the inter-connectivity of the population living and working in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, the designation of statehood for the District will positively impact residents throughout the metropolitan Washington region; and

WHEREAS, statehood would allow the region to secure an equitable share of federal funding critical to address the current COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine distribution, and the immediate shortfalls essential to addressing the economic recovery of the region, and future public health emergencies; and

WHEREAS, statehood would allow the region more representation to advocate for additional federal infrastructure funding critical to address the needs of regional transportation systems such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); and

WHEREAS, statehood would allow more control of regional public safety and coordination of mutual aid by granting the District of Columbia the ability to mobilize the District's National Guard when necessary to protect our region's residents, as well as federal assets, if requested; and

WHEREAS, statehood is necessary in realizing our regional commitment to advance racial equity as the District of Columbia's status means that their population, more than 11 percent of our region's residents, a majority of them being Black and other persons of color, bear all responsibilities required of national citizenship while being denied the the rights and privileges afforded all other citizens of other states; and

WHEREAS, statehood would add two Senators to the regional delegation and more accurately represent COG jurisdictions in Congress; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia has approved 25 consecutive balanced budgets relying on locally raised revenues, operates its own school system, manages its own SNAP, Medicaid, and transportation programs and receives federal block grants in the same manner as the 50 states that are typically awarded to states (Workforce training grants, Community Development Block Grants for housing, Ryan White Funding to combat HIV and Violence Against Women Act grants); and

WHEREAS, while the District of Columbia is fiscally self-sufficient with a \$16.9 billion gross budget, it is subject to Congressional review, unlike any other jurisdiction in the United States, and Congress maintains veto power over any law passed by the District's locally elected Mayor and City Council; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 51 and S.51 preserve the Capitol complex, the White House, National monuments and other federal property as the Federal District, independent of any state, in order to fulfill the constitutional mandate; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia has satisfied the four requirements to become a state: residents affirmed their desire to become a state; ratified a constitution; established new state boundaries; and committed to a republican form of government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

The board supports statehood for the residents of the District of Columbia and urges Congress to pass legislation to define a smaller federal district and establish the state of Washington, D.C. without delay. The board directs the Executive Director, or his designee to share this resolution with Congressional leadership and the members of the metropolitan Washington regional Congressional delegation. Furthermore, the board encourages member jurisdictions to speak out in support of statehood for the District of Columbia.