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June 25, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to express our support for H.R. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act, to make D.C. our nation's 51st state. We urge you to vote YES because H.R. 51 will correct the basic injustice that denies the 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia the right to full representation in Congress, and therefore, denies them full citizenship. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 116th Congress.

The District of Columbia has a larger population than Vermont and Wyoming, and about the same population as Alaska and North Dakota. District residents pay \$10,841 per capita per year in federal taxes, more than any other state, the [Tax Foundation](#) reports. Yet taxation without representation endures in the capital of the nation that promotes democracy to the world.

The nation witnessed one ominous consequence of the District of Columbia's lack of full sovereignty this month: President Trump deployed thousands of National Guard troops against peaceful protesters near the White House. When the president urged governors to call out Guard members in response to nationwide protests after the murder of George Floyd, the governors, who are responsible for issuing orders calling the Guard into service, did not. However, because the District of Columbia is not a state, President Trump was able to deploy the Guard, inflaming tensions in an unnecessary show of force that placed protesters in harm's way. Such treatment reeks of colonialism, especially given the city's diverse, multi-racial, multi-ethnic population.

Granting residents of the District of Columbia the right to full citizenship is a matter of fairness as well as respect. H.R. 51 would preserve the constitutionally required federal district that houses all three branches of the federal government, our iconic monuments, and the National Mall. The neighborhoods and commercial areas where the people of the District of Columbia live and raise their families would comprise the 51st state.

In addition, we oppose the insertion of any changes to H.R. 51, whether through a Motion to Recommit or other vehicle, related to the D.C. private school voucher program (Scholarships for Opportunity and Results, or SOAR). The NEA continues to oppose the voucher program because

it diverts resources from the public schools that most D.C. students attend, shifting public money to private schools that are not subject to all the federal civil rights laws that public schools obey, including laws protecting students from discrimination.

The glaring lack of democracy in our nation's capital is a grave injustice that trivializes the principles of fairness and equality that educators teach in classrooms every day. Just like residents of the 50 states, D.C. residents deserve equal voting rights, the right to self-government, and a meaningful voice in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association