



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Vice President*

Noel Candelaria  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

March 19, 2021

Committee on Oversight and Reform  
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 are submitting these comments for the committee's March 22 hearing on H.R. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act.

H.R. 51 will make the District of Columbia the 51st state, correcting the injustice that denies the 712,000 residents of the District of Columbia the right to full representation in Congress, and therefore, denies them full citizenship. The District of Columbia has a larger population than Vermont and Wyoming. District residents pay the highest per-capita federal income taxes in the nation and in total, pay more in taxes than residents of 21 other states. Yet taxation without representation endures in the capital of the nation that promotes democracy to the world.

Granting residents of the District of Columbia the right to full citizenship is a matter of fairness and respect. H.R. 51 would preserve the constitutionally required district that houses the federal government, our 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.

This issue is also about safety. We are in a time of heightened protests and demonstrations across our nation. An outsize share of such events occur in our Nation's Capital, and on January 6, we watched in horror as violent marauders attempted to overthrow our government. Yet, because the District of Columbia is not a state, its government does not have the ability to deploy the National Guard. This places citizens in harm's way and played a role in the death and destruction of the 6th.

In no other democracy in the world are citizens denied equal representation because of where they live—a denial that is particularly unjust in a majority-Black city given our nation's history of suppressing the Black vote. D.C. residents, like residents of the 50 states, deserve equal voting rights, the right to self-government, and a meaningful voice in Congress.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association