



September 18, 2019

House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Chairman Elijah Cummings
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cummings and Committee Members:

Nearly 700,000 people call the District of Columbia home; they pay federal taxes and serve in the armed forces, but are denied a voice in the U.S. Senate and a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives. Only since the passage of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act in 1973 have residents of the District of Columbia had the privilege of electing their own mayor and legislature. However, unlike any other jurisdiction in the country, all laws passed by the council and signed by the mayor are subject to a 30-day congressional review period. Because of this unique relationship between the District of Columbia and the United States Congress, it's not uncommon to see Members of Congress — sometimes those who represent states thousands of miles away from Washington, D.C. — take advantage of this oversight to impose their personal political agenda on D.C. residents and undermine the District of Columbia's locally elected officials.

In years past, Congress has passed annual riders prohibiting D.C. from using locally raised tax dollars in alignment with D.C. residents' values, including access to safe, legal abortion, no matter what a person's economic status. Specifically, Congress has prohibited allowing the D.C. Medicaid program to cover the cost of abortions for individuals who otherwise would not have access. Earlier this year, for the first time in nearly a decade, the House passed a Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill that did not include this anti-home rule rider; its fate in the Senate remains unknown. And, even if the D.C. Medicaid ban was to be lifted in the FSGG FY-2020 appropriations law, there is no guarantee that a future Congress would respect D.C. and not put the ban back in place. Access to abortion should never be dependent on a person's economic status; passage of the Washington, D.C. Admission Act would ensure that locally raised tax dollars could be used to help pay for abortions for the District's most vulnerable residents, trusting D.C. residents to make their own healthcare decisions in consultation with their doctor - without interference from politicians who are not elected by or accountable to D.C. residents.

Residents of our nation's capital deserve better than being used as a political football subject to the whims of any single Member of Congress from any congressional district across the country; they deserve the same rights and representation residents of all other states currently enjoy. Tomorrow, as you listen to testimony on the Washington, D.C. Admission Act (H.R. 51) we encourage you to uphold and defend the principles of *liberty and justice for all* by supporting the right of the 700,000 people who call Washington, D.C. home to have equal representation in Congress as well as full control of their own political destiny.

Sincerely,

Planned Parenthood Federation of America
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