



Greater Washington Area Chapter

A Legacy of Service. A Promise of Justice.

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March 19, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC), one of the Washington, D.C. area affiliates of the National Bar Association (NBA), to urge you to support H.R.51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act. The act provides for the admission of Washington, Douglas Commonwealth, as the 51st state of the United States of America and establishes a Statehood Transition Commission to advise the President, the Congress and the current leaders of Washington, D.C. on the process of transition. Our parent organization, the NBA, was founded in 1925 and is the nation's oldest and largest national network of predominantly African-American attorneys and judges, representing the interests of approximately 66,000 lawyers, judges, law professors, and law students across the country. Our organization, GWAC, as one of the NBA's 84 affiliate chapters, is solidly in support of the passage this landmark, equal justice legislation.

Our organization views the passage of the Washington, D.C. Admission Act as a fundamental step in the long march toward equal justice and in the mission articulated by our nation's founding fathers of forming "a more perfect union." First founded under President George Washington in 1790, 231 years ago, the District of Columbia is home to approximately 715,000 U.S. citizens. That's a larger population than the states of both Wyoming and Vermont and almost as large as that of the states of Alaska and North Dakota. Collectively, Washington, D.C.'s residents paid more in total federal income taxes last year than did the residents of thirteen states. Per capita, they paid more into the national coffers than the residents of all fifty states, with Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey coming in second, third, fourth and fifth respectively. Additionally, D.C. residents have worn the uniform of the American Armed Services and served this nation bravely in every U.S. military conflict since the War of 1812. Yet, despite all of this, the nearly three-quarters of a million residents who call Washington, D.C. their home have been denied the most basic right shared by more than 330 million of their fellow American citizens, the right to voting representation in the U.S. Senate and in the U.S. House of Representatives. The



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District of Columbia, because it is not a state, cannot even spend its own money or pass any legislation to govern its own internal affairs without that spending authority being subject to Congressional scrutiny or that legislation being subject to Congressional veto.

Two-hundred forty-five years ago, the leaders and representatives of thirteen largely self-governing British colonies spread out along the Atlantic seaboard from Massachusetts to Georgia, persuaded their fellow colonial citizens to fight a war of independence from the British crown, proclaiming to the world that “taxation without representation is tyranny.” That same tyranny exists today for the residents of the sixty-nine square mile enclave along the banks of the Potomac River now known as the District of Columbia. But as the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once so eloquently stated, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” The officers and members of our organization believe that 231 years is long enough and we implore you, as our elected representative to the 117th Congress, to deliver justice for our fellow American citizens living in Washington, DC, by voting in favor of H.R.51.

Thank you for your consideration of our support of H.R.51. If you have any questions, please reach out to me directly at president@gwacbar.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Erinn D. Martin

President

Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association
(GWAC)



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