

Deeya Natarajan

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### A Constant Fight For Equal Rights

As the capital of the United States and home to over one hundred historical landmarks, the District of Columbia bears immensely important responsibilities. Yet, since the beginning of its establishment, D.C. has been ignored, neglected, and disrespected by the U.S. government, which has consistently refused D.C. statehood. As a result, many D.C. residents are being denied their rights protected under the U.S Constitution as American citizens. It is inexplicable how the United States, a country committed to ensuring equal rights to all its citizens, deprives those very rights to those living in the nation's capital. The topic of D.C.'s statehood has sparked controversy for decades as many conservatives argue that D.C. would become a "superstate" or that giving it such status would be unconstitutional. However, D.C. should be considered a state because African-Americans and other minority groups are disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of living in D.C, and D.C. residents are taxed quite heavily, forced to live without fair representation, and are subject to unbalanced Congressional control.

As a preliminary matter, a large percentage of individuals residing in D.C. are African-Americans. In fact, "D.C.'s population is 46% black and 19.4% other people of color. Admission of D.C. as a state would make it the second majority non white state after Hawaii. Puerto Rico is 98.7% Latino or Hispanic and 34.8% other people of color" (ProCon.org). D.C. residents are being denied the right to vote and hold political positions in the United States government. In a country where racial oppression and discrimination already runs rampant, this is simply unacceptable. The main opponents to D.C.'s statehood are Republicans, who argue that these minorities are simply more likely to vote liberally which would result in an unequal

balance/shift between the two political parties. However, this argument is hypocritical because Republicans in American history have advocated for something similar when it served their interests. For example, Hawaii was granted and approved for American statehood so Republicans could achieve more representation after Alaska appeared to be leaning democratic (ProCon.org). With this being said, approximately 721,000 individuals live in Washington D.C, with large minority populations, and they deserve to be represented fairly. With such a large minority population in D.C., D.C. statehood is important in making America more inclusive.

Also, Congress has immense control over D.C. residents' lives, unlike any other territory in the United States. Part of D.C.'s prestige stems from its status as the federal capital, where Congress is located. According to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Congress' power over D.C. residents includes its control over the local budget and laws. (Eleanor Holmes Norton) This means that D.C. can drastically change from conservative to liberal policies because the political leadership in Congress is always changing. As a resident, it is extremely difficult to support and respect one's government when its policies are subject to the whims and fancies of those currently in control. Additionally, Congress has the ability to abolish the D.C. government if there are enough votes to do so. This is completely illogical because there is no point to such a government if it works solely on the puppet strings of Congress. With such strict federal control from Congress, this gives citizens absolutely no motive to become involved or interested in politics.

The statehood of D.C. is constitutional because it falls within the confines of the 15th Amendment. The 15th Amendment states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Section 2 of the Amendment continues that Congress should do

everything in its power to reinforce and ensure that voting rights are recognized. Congress is clearly violating this amendment of the Constitution and must do something immediately to stop trampling on the constitutional rights of D.C. residents. Geographically, a Washington D.C. state should not be concerning. Since the beginning of its creation, large populations have lived in D.C. and there has never been a significant issue with land or property resources. Yes, the land will be divided up differently if Washington, D.C. were to become a state; however, there would be no significant impact on citizens. Moreover, D.C. would not be a superstate as it would only have three electoral votes. While our Founding Fathers might not have intended this, circumstances have changed dramatically since the time the Constitution was written. We must evolve and adapt to the new circumstances presented by our country.

In conclusion, residents of D.C. have been treated unfairly, and it is time for change. Constitutional rights are being violated as a result of this unequal power balance and, therefore, something must be done. Republicans will continue to complain and claim that D.C. statehood will render D.C. too powerful compared to other U.S. states, that it goes against everything the Constitution stands for, and that it is geographically impossible. However, these arguments are not well-reasoned or well-supported. D.C. deserves to become a state, for its citizens and for America.

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