

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**Board of Directors' Meeting**  
**March 14, 2007**

**District of Columbia Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act FAQ**

○ **What Is the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act (DC VRA, H.R. 328)?**

The DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act, introduced by Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), would add two voting members to the U.S. House of Representatives—one to represent Washington, DC, and one to represent Utah. The DC VRA establishes DC as a congressional district for the purposes of representation in the House, and Washingtonians would receive a vote in Congress for the first time ever. The DC VRA would also provide for an additional representative to the next eligible state, Utah.

○ **Why Is the DC Voting Rights Act Needed?**

Americans living in our nation's capital pay taxes, serve on juries, and defend our nation during times of war, but do not have voting representation in either chamber of Congress. The United States is the only democratic country in the world that denies voting representation to citizens of the nation's capital. A national poll conducted in January 2005 showed that 82 percent of Americans believe that Washingtonians deserve full voting representation in the House and Senate. While we are attempting to export democracy abroad, it is time we provide American rights for people living in America's capital.

○ **Why Link Washington, DC, and Utah?**

Nearly 600,000 people live in DC, all of whom are denied voting representation in Congress. Utah narrowly lost getting an additional congressional seat after the last U.S. Census in 2000. Officials in Utah believe that thousands of missionaries living abroad were unfairly excluded during that Census count. This bill addresses that concern and provides a "vote-neutral" option by adding two seats most likely represented by a Democrat and Republican, respectively.

○ **Is It Constitutional?**

Yes. The Constitution gives Congress exclusive legislative authority over DC in Article I, Section 8, Clause 17. Legal scholars, including Kenneth Starr, Viet Dinh, Patricia Wald, and others, hold that the Congress has the authority to grant the District of Columbia full congressional voting representation by passing simple legislation.

○ **Who are the Sponsor(s)/Co-Sponsor(s)**

(National Capital Region Congressional Delegation shown in **bold**)

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