

DC Vote Voice

FALL 2004

www.dcvote.org

From the Executive Director

Dear Friend:

DC Vote had an unprecedented year full of legislative and educational activities. **With your donation we will continue our momentum into 2005.**

In 2004, we made significant progress spreading the word about DC's plight. DC Vote helped move DC's presidential primary to first-in-the-nation and garnered national and international media attention.

Our educational video, *It's Time*, was shown live during the Democratic National Convention in Boston and seen across the country and around the world. Additionally, DC Vote's most recent public service announcement video, *Bring Democracy Home*, was aired by Comcast of the District locally throughout the fall.

DC Vote's Internet communications program led to a *Golden Dot Award* from the George Washington University, and our website averages greater than 10,000 unique hits each month. Locally, DC Vote participated in dozens of community events and lectured at area high schools and colleges.

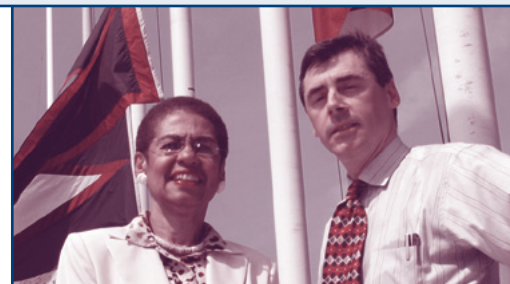
On the legislative front, DC Vote worked with U.S. Representative Tom Davis to formulate a bill addressing DC's lack of voting representation in Congress and testified at a landmark congressional hearing in June.

We also led the fight to stop congressional efforts to repeal DC's own local gun safety laws. Our coalition partner organizations helped generate thousands of emails and calls to Congress on that issue because DC residents want the vote not more guns, and because members of Congress should not be allowed to pass laws for DC that they would never even consider imposing on their own constituents.

Next year, our educational and advocacy efforts will continue to grow. We will release a report on how disenfranchisement harms public health in DC. The historical and educational content on our website will multiply considerably making dcvote.org by far the most comprehensive source of information on DC voting rights. We are also planning an aggressive educational effort that combines "earned media" coverage, Internet campaigns, and advertisements.

Your contribution today will go a long way toward helping us achieve our goals for next year. I hope DC Vote can count on your support. Thank you, and we look forward to working together in 2005!

Sincerely, Ilir Zherka



John Capozzi is joined by Delegate Norton to raise DC's flag for the first time at Union Station.



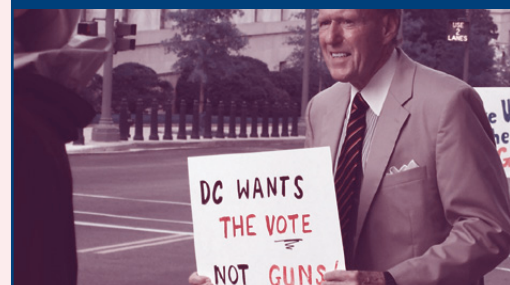
DC Vote was part of a continuing education seminar for DC teachers held at Anacostia High School.



Kim Bassett and others from DC Vote helped educate thousands about DC's inequality at the DNC in Boston.



For the fifth year in a row, DC Vote volunteers helped engage DC residents in our struggle at Adams Morgan Day.



Rep. Ray Browne and dozens of protesters rallied to save DC's gun safety laws from congressional attack.

Foundations & Grantmakers Recognize DC Vote's Critical Work

The **Community Foundation for the National Capital Region** chose DC Vote as one of 15 organizations to highlight in their annual Spirit of Giving Guide. "Hear My Voice," the title of this year's guide, emphasizes organizations working to increase civic engagement for social change and economic justice. www.cfncr.org

DC Vote is one of 27 national organizations selected as a successful engagement investment by **Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement**. PACE is an association of grantmakers committed to inspiring interest, understanding and investment in civic and community engagement. www.pacefunders.org

TouchDC chose DC Vote as one of 55 nonprofits to feature on their newly designed website. TouchDC is a broad coalition of funders, nonprofit organizations, and media partners working together to encourage residents of the Washington, DC Region to become engaged as donors and volunteers at local nonprofit organizations. www.touchdc.org

DC Gun Safety Laws Attacked

On September 29th, Congress showed DC Vote, our coalition members, and our supporters all the reasons why DC Vote and residents of the District of Columbia continue to fight for voting representation in Congress. Without regard for the safety of District children and adults or for the District's elected officials, the House of Representatives passed legislation repealing DC's gun safety laws. Led by Reps. Mark Souder (R-IN) and Mike Ross (D-AK), H.R. 3193 passed by a vote of 250 to 171. The bill was not considered in the Senate.

DC Vote and dozens of DC Vote supporters protested on Capitol Hill, and over 100 people attended the rally. Other advocacy efforts included:

- Sending a letter signed by 15 organizations to every member of Congress
- Helping the Mayor with an op-ed published in the *Washington Post*
- Circulating an advocacy alert to 5,000 people generating hundreds of calls and letters to Congress
- Urging our partners and the Brady Campaign to issue alerts themselves and Brady, Common Cause, LCCR, LWR, and others responded resulting in thousands of calls and letters from around the country
- Keeping our website updated with multiple additions every day
- Volunteers calling over 700 of our supporters about the protest

Read more about the protest, the bills, and the media coverage on DC Vote's website.

If H.R. 3193 had become law, it would have repealed "the District's:

- 1). Registration requirement for possession of firearms;
- 2). Prohibition on registration of pistols (handguns);
- 3). Prohibition on possession of handgun ammunition;
- 4). Requirement that, under certain conditions, firearms in the possession of certain individuals must be kept unloaded, disassembled, or with the trigger locked;
- 5). Related firearm registration requirements such as applicant qualifications and filing deadline. And;
- 6). Eliminate criminal penalties for possessing an unregistered firearms."

(Congressional Research Services, Summary of H.R. 3193, 2003)

DC Vote PSAs & The Media

With help from soldiers and veterans of the District of Columbia, DC Vote produced a 60-second public service announcement called "Bring Democracy Home" in June. The video highlights the service and sacrifice of DC residents who defend our country's ideals of democracy but are denied voting representation in Congress—the very body of legislators who send them to war.

Launched in July 2004 at one of Mayor Williams' weekly press conferences, the video aired in the Boston media market during the week of the Democratic National Convention. "Bring Democracy Home" is currently airing on Comcast of the District and DCTV.

A 90-second version of DC Vote's "It's Time" educational video aired at the Democratic National Convention just before Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton took the stage and spoke about DC's injustice. The Reverend Al Sharpton also used his speech there to tell America about Washington's denial of democracy.

In addition to our PSAs and media coverage at the DNC, DC Vote and DC voting rights have received an unprecedented level of earned media over the past year.

With regular print coverage of our issue and events in the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, the *New York Times*, and local publications, more people are reading about our issue than ever before. In 2004, even publications like the *Weekly Standard*, *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* covered the issue of DC voting rights.

Roll Call, widely regarded as the leading publication for congressional news and information, has featured DC Vote and the DC voting rights struggle in nine articles and one opinion editorial this year alone.

Illir Zherka appeared on *News Talk*, a live news program on NewsChannel 8, five times this year discussing issues from DC's first-in-the-nation presidential primary to the legislation proposed by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) to give DC a full vote in the House of Representatives.

DC Vote events and activities have also been seen by millions on all of the local affiliates of NBC, ABC, CBS, and FOX, as well as nationally on CNN, C-SPAN, MSNBC, Univision, and others. On the radio waves, DC Vote has been heard locally on WAMU, WTOF, WPGC, WWDC and WHFS and nationally on NPR.

Rep. Tom Davis Supports DC Representation Legislation

On June 23, 2004, the House Committee on Government Reform held a hearing to discuss bills before Congress addressing DC's lack of congressional representation. Rep. Tom Davis, Chairman of the Committee, added his own "District of Columbia Fairness in Representation Act" (H.R. 4640) to the docket.

Through simple legislation, Davis' bill would provide the District of Columbia with a full voting member in the House of Representatives. The bill would also provide Utah with an additional seat in the House until the next U.S. Census in 2010.

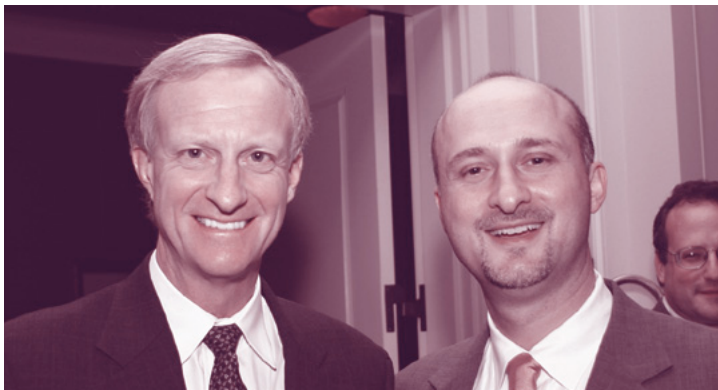
DC Vote's Illir Zherka gave testimony at the hearing supporting Davis' efforts to give DC a voting member in the House while strongly urging Davis and Congress to take action to give DC residents representation in the Senate as well. Mayor Williams, Council Chairman Cropp, LCCR Executive Director Wade Henderson, Ted Trabue of the Greater Washington Board of Trade,

and the Honorable Kenneth Starr also gave testimony supporting Davis' bill.

In November 2004, the Committee released a report it had commissioned by former U.S. Assistant Attorney General Viet D. Dinh. Like the testimony of Ken Starr, Dinh's report supports the constitutional authority of Congress through the "District Clause" (U.S. Const. Art. I, para. 8, cl. 17) to pass simple legislation to end DC's injustice.

Davis is expected to reintroduce his bill in the 109th Congress. DC Vote will work with Davis, his staff, and other supporters in Congress to insert provisions for some form of representation for DC in the Senate.

Visit our website at www.dcvote.org to read the bill, the testimonies, and the report by Viet Dinh.



Champion of Democracy and DC City Councilmember Jack Evans with Ilir Zherka



Cathy Hughes accepts her Champions of Democracy Award and promises to use Radio One and other resources to fight the battle for DC voting rights



Sweet Honey in the Rock delights the crowd with songs of inspiration after accepting their award



Daniel Solomon, DC Vote's Board Chair, Ilir Zherka, and Champions of Democracy Chair Bruce Spiva honor event underwriters with Community Spirit awards

DC Vote's Champions of Democracy Awards 2004



DC Vote held its Fourth Annual Champions of Democracy Awards Reception on Wednesday, October 27, 2004 at the Mandarin Oriental, Washington DC. This annual event is DC Vote's most significant way of honoring individuals and organizations who show commitment to civil and human rights and are dedicated to bringing democracy to Washington, DC.

Nearly 400 people turned out to help honor DC Vote's 2004 Champions of Democracy: DC City Councilmember and leader in the fight to make DC's presidential primary first-in-the-nation Jack Evans; founder and chairperson of Radio One Catherine Hughes; and Sweet Honey in the Rock, the internationally renowned African-American a cappella ensemble. Attendees were treated to several songs from Sweet Honey in the Rock and entertained by jazz harmonicist Frédéric Yonnet.

The Awards Reception and Silent Auction are DC Vote's most important fundraising activities, and this year our generous supporters and friends helped DC Vote have an exceptionally successful event. Our Second Annual Silent Auction was full of items and services donated by local individuals and organizations as well as some national corporations. All proceeds raised from the event help fund DC Vote's programs and advocacy efforts throughout the year.

DC Vote is grateful to all the volunteers, sponsors, supporters, and friends who helped make this year's Awards Reception another amazing celebration of the DC voting rights movement.

Underwriters for the Event



Russell C. Lindner
Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C.
Herbert Miller

Special thanks to Kelly/Editors Press for their support of Champions of Democracy and our ongoing printing needs (www.kellypress.com).

DC Vote in the Community

One of DC Vote's most important activities is providing educational information about the inequality of District residents. By educating and engaging people in the struggle to bring democracy to our nation's capital, DC Vote is building a coalition that will help finish the work of the civil rights movement.

Over the summer, DC Vote was present at numerous community activities including: the July 4th Palisades Parade; the Black Family Reunion Celebration; the Adams Morgan Day Festival; the Green Festival DC; the Barracks Row Festival; the Brookland Community Festival; the Takoma Park Festival; and others. DC Vote also gave presentations and held discussions with students and adults from: City Year; the Georgetown Day School; the American University; DC public school teachers; numerous governmental events; and others.

DC Vote is grateful to our dedicated volunteers who helped at our many activities this year.



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The residents of Washington, DC, fight and die for our country in times of war, serve on juries to uphold American freedom, and pay federal income taxes. Yet, they are denied voting representation in Congress. Support DC Vote and help bring equality, civil rights and democracy to our nation's capital.

New Names, Faces & Special Thanks

This fall several members of our Board of Directors are retiring. We have been well served by the wise counsel and leadership of: **Lloyd Leonard**, League of Women Voters; **Charles Miller**, Partner, Covington & Burling and lead counsel for *Alexander v. Daley*; **Kathryn Schmidt**, League of Women Voters; **Walter Smith**, Executive Director, DC Appleseed Center; **Joseph Sternlieb**, DC Vote founder and Deputy Director, Downtown BID; and **Joshua Wyner**, Chief Program Officer, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. These exceptional board members have helped to shape DC Vote as an organization and greatly contributed to the current status of the DC voting rights movement. We are forever indebted to them for their time, effort and devotion.

As these board members leave, we are delighted to welcome three new members: **Maria Olivas**, Senior Manager, External Affairs, Verizon Washington, DC; **John Klenert**, Gay and Lesbian Consultant; and **Sarah Pokempner**, Social Worker & Community Activist. We look forward to the new energy and ideas these outstanding individuals will bring to keep the momentum going.

DC Vote gives special thanks to the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** (www.thetaskforce.org) and to **Eagle Design and Management, Inc.** (www.aerie.com) for in-kind donations of office equipment.

Use the enclosed envelope or visit our website today at www.dcvote.org to make a contribution to DC Vote.

DC Vote is a 501 (c) (3) educational and advocacy organization whose mission is to secure full voting representation in Congress for the residents of the District of Columbia.