



February 20, 2009

Dear Senator:

We urge you to vote to end the filibuster on S. 160, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act. The cloture vote on the motion to proceed is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24.

The citizens of the District of Columbia, like all other Americans, deserve to be represented in Congress. DC residents pay federal income taxes, serve on juries, and die in wars to defend American democracy. DC citizens are currently serving in the armed forces in Iraq, fighting for new democratic rights for Iraqis that they do not enjoy themselves.

This legislation has majority support in the House and Senate and has the strong support of a large coalition of organizations from the voting rights and civil rights community. Prominent Republicans, including former HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, former Representative Tom Davis (R-VA), among others, also support the legislation.

When the bill was before the Senate in 2007, Secretary Kemp urged Senators to "Vote the American way. Get on the right side of history."

Constitutional scholars including conservatives Kenneth Starr and Viet Dinh have written and testified in support of the constitutionality of this approach to providing DC citizens with voting representation in Congress.

The DC House Voting Rights Act recognizes that partisan political considerations have always entered into issues that are fundamentally about fairness and justice. This proposal puts those considerations aside by adding two new seats to the House, one for the District and another that will go to Utah, which barely missed gaining another seat after the last census.

The Senate now faces a critical test of its commitment to the democratic rights of all Americans. It must ensure that the District of Columbia has voting representation in Congress.

Sincerely,

Bob Edgar
President and CEO
Common Cause