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July 15, 2008

Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Majority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

We urge you to schedule a vote on the DC House Voting Rights Act (S. 1257) before the November elections.

As you know, this is the first time since the days of segregation that Senators are filibustering a voting rights bill. This unconscionable act must be publicly debated, and ultimately defeated.

Since the vote on this bill last September, we have traveled to Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, Oregon and Washington to educate constituents about the filibuster. What we have found reinforces the results of a 2005 poll which showed that eighty-two percent strongly support providing full voting representation once they become aware of this problem. In 2007, thousands of Americans called and wrote letters to their Senators in support of S. 1257. Millions of people learned about the bill through hundreds of stories that appeared in media outlets around the world.

We believe that, by scheduling a vote, you will provide another opportunity for citizens across the country to engage in a dialogue with their Senators about the DC House Voting Rights Act. We are hopeful that a group of Senators will decide to vote "yes" on cloture as a result of that dialogue. At the very least, another vote in the Senate will provide a greater opportunity for media coverage of the hypocrisy of those Senators who support extending democracy around the world while refusing to bring democracy home to our nation's capital.

We are aware of and respect the time constraints under which you must operate. We ask, however, that you also consider how very long Washingtonians have been waiting to be treated as full American citizens. We look forward to working with you on a bipartisan basis to secure the votes necessary for cloture and passage of the DC House Voting Rights Act this year.

Sincerely,

DC Vote
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

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