



AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

July 14, 2006

Support H.R. 5388, the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act (DC Voting Rights Act)

Dear Representative,

The American Humanist Association (AHA) urges you to support H.R. 5388, the "DC Voting Rights Act," which would provide Americans living in Washington, DC with representation in Congress. We urge you to vote in support of the 600,000 U.S. citizens living in the District by cosponsoring and working to enact the bill.

DC residents deserve the same voting rights as every other American citizen. They pay federal income taxes, serve on juries, and die in wars in defense of our country, but they do not have voting representation in Congress. The time has come to confront the unfair denial of representation in our nation's capital and extend democracy to the citizens living within the heart of our government.

As you may know, the DC Voting Rights Act passed the House Committee on Government Reform on May 18, 2006, with overwhelming bipartisan support and a vote of 29-4. The bill, introduced by Representative Tom Davis and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, would provide Washingtonians with a voting member of the House of Representatives for the first time ever.

Members of Congress are tapping into a strong sentiment throughout the country. A national poll conducted by KRC Research last year showed that 82 percent of Americans – a consistent percentage across age, region, and party lines - believe that DC residents deserve full voting representation in Congress. Legal scholars, too, agree that the DC Voting Rights Act is solidly constitutional; Judge Kenneth Starr, Georgetown Law Professor Viet Dinh, and attorneys from Latham & Watkins LLP, the DC Appleseed Center, and Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP have all written analyses supporting DC representation.

As Corliss Lamont states, "Since Humanism as a functioning credo is so closely bound up with the methods of reason and science, plainly free speech and democracy are its very lifeblood." The AHA, on behalf of its over 7,800 members, believes that extending voting rights to DC residents is absolutely essential to our nation's democratic ideals. Furthermore, we are concerned about the potential to ignore the concerns of DC's urban population; extending the same basic privileges afforded to the rest of the country to residents of the District will enable their voices to be heard.

The AHA urges you to consider the democratic principles of representation for all and vote in support of the DC Voting Rights Act.

Sincerely,

Melvin S. Lipman
President