



September 20, 2006

Dear Representative:

Common Cause strongly supports H.R. 5388, DC Voting Rights Act. We are pleased that the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution will be holding an important hearing on the bill on Thursday, and we urge the committee to markup the bill soon after the hearing.

The DC Voting Rights Act will give the citizens of the District of Columbia voting representation in the House. The bill was introduced by Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and has both Republican and Democratic cosponsors. The bill passed the House Government Reform Committee by a vote of 29 to 4 on May 17, 2006.

We believe this bill is a fair and politically viable way to correct an injustice that has existed for over 200 years. The committee has an opportunity to make history by bringing more than a half million Americans fully into our democracy, where they belong.

The citizens of the District of Columbia deserve the same right that all other Americans have to be represented in Congress. DC residents pay federal income taxes, serve on juries, and are currently serving in the armed forces in Iraq, fighting for new democratic rights for Iraqis.

The DC Voting Rights Act is supported by the DC City Council and the Mayor. Outside of DC, most Americans express surprise that this injustice still exists and believe that DC residents deserve voting representation in Congress.

H.R. 5388 is a unique approach to a problem that has remained unresolved for most of our nation's history. The compromise forged by Representative Davis and Delegate Norton recognizes that partisan political considerations have always entered into issues that are fundamentally about fairness and justice.

We urge the committee to markup the bill next week and to vote for final passage without amendment, and give the 600,000 Americans in the District a vote in the House.

Sincerely,

Chellie Pingree

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