



### **What Is the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act (DC VRA, H.R. 5388)?**

The DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act (H.R. 5388), introduced by Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), would add two voting members to the U.S. House of Representatives—one to represent Washington, DC, and one to represent Utah. The DC VRA establishes DC as a congressional district for the purposes of representation in the House, and Washingtonians would receive a vote in the United States Congress for the first time ever. The DC VRA would also provide for an additional representative to the next eligible state, Utah.

### **Why Is the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act Needed?**

Americans living in our nation's capital pay taxes, serve on juries, and defend our nation during times of war, but do not have voting representation in either chamber of Congress. The United States is the only democratic country in the world that denies voting representation to citizen of the nation's capital. A national poll conducted in January 2005 showed that 82 percent of Americans believe that Washingtonians deserve voting representation in the House and Senate. While we are attempting to export democracy abroad, it is time we provide American rights for people living in America's capital.

### **Why Link Washington, DC, and Utah?**

Nearly 600,000 people live in DC, all of whom are denied voting representation in Congress. Utah narrowly lost getting an additional congressional seat after the last U.S. Census in 2000. Officials in Utah believe that thousands of missionaries living abroad were unfairly excluded during that Census count. This bill addresses that concern and provides a "vote-neutral" option by adding two seats most likely represented by a Democrat and Republican, respectively.

### **Is It Constitutional?**

Yes. The Constitution gives Congress exclusive legislative authority over DC in Article I, Section 8, Clause 17. Legal scholars, including Kenneth Starr, Viet Dinh, and others, hold that the Congress has the authority to grant the District of Columbia full congressional voting representation by passing simple legislation.

### **Is a Vote in the House of Representatives Enough for DC Residents?**

A vote in the House of Representative is very important, but insufficient without representation in the Senate. Congress is a bi-cameral legislature and DC's biggest disadvantage now is that residents have absolutely no representation, whether voting or otherwise, in the Senate. That must change.

### **What Can You Do to Help?**

Call or write your member of Congress and Senators. Ask them to support the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act (H.R. 5388) and pass this important bill that provides representation for DC residents in the U.S. House of Representatives. Also ask them to support legislation that would give DC residents representation in the U.S. Senate. Visit [www.dcvote.org](http://www.dcvote.org) to learn more about the DC VRA (H.R. 5388) and other information on DC voting rights.