



July 16, 2007

## **Kathryn Ray: Her Family's Right to Vote Should Be Her Right Too**



Dear Senator:

Kathryn Ray is a Washingtonian by birth and by choice. Her ancestors have lived in the District for more than 200 years, even before their family farm was ceded from Maryland to become the nation's capital. Before 1800, her family living in Washington, DC had the right to elect voting representatives to Congress. Her family's right to vote should be her right too.

Kathryn has worked as a librarian for more than 30 years, helping kids and raising her own in the city she calls home. Kathryn and her husband volunteer with the PTA of their children's public school and are active members of community groups. She is proud to be a Washingtonian and proud to be an American. Yet—though she pays taxes, serves on juries, and has had family members fight in wars—she has no voting representation in Congress.

Congress now has the opportunity to right this 200-year-old wrong. Recently, the DC House Voting Rights Act passed the Senate Homeland Security Committee by a bipartisan vote of 9-1. The House of Representatives passed a similar measure in April 2007 with a bipartisan vote of 241-177. I urge you to support this bill when it comes before the full Senate.

There are reports, however, that some Senators are considering a filibuster of this bill. We are reminded of the notorious filibusters of voting rights legislation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when a faction of Senators used procedural tactics to delay legislation to expand democracy. **No Senator has filibustered a voting rights bill in the last 40 years.** We should not return to this dark period in our nation's history.

DC residents have fought and died in every American war. Kathryn's great-great grandfather volunteered to protect Washington during the War of 1812. Her great uncle died in France during World War I. Her father and his two brothers bravely served during World War II, including the D-Day landing and the liberation of Paris.

Kathryn's ancestors fought the British under the slogan "No Taxation Without Representation." When they returned to their farm after the war, they voted and elected representatives to the new United States Congress, even after the District lines had been drawn. Only after 1801 was Kathryn's family denied the very right they had fought for less than twenty years before—the right to end taxation without representation.

For the sake of Kathryn Ray and all the tax-paying Americans of the District of Columbia, we ask you to vote for the DC House Voting Rights Act of 2007 (S. 1257).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ilir Zherka".

Ilir Zherka  
Executive Director