

### Population and Economy: How Washington, DC Compares to the Fifty United States

The decision to establish a permanent seat of government was made in the 1787 Constitution which established the current federal system. Congress passed the "Residence Act" in July 1790, establishing the location of the seat of government within certain parameters and giving the president the right to appoint three commissioners to oversee development. Virginia and Maryland ceded the land for the seat of government. (The Virginia portion was retroceded to that state in 1846.) In March 1791, George Washington signed a land agreement with 19 landowners in the area that became Washington City, and issued a proclamation directing the commissioners where to run the boundary lines. The federal government moved to Washington City in the District of Columbia in 1800. DC residents have not lived in a state since. They live in a federal district.

Congress is formed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. All states have equality in the Senate, with two members each. In the House, the larger states have the greatest number of representatives, as determined by population each time a census is conducted (every 10 years). Under the Constitution, Congress was given "*exclusive legislative authority*" over DC to protect the then weak federal government from local meddling in federal affairs. Until Congress assumed this power in 1801, DC residents voted in Virginia and Maryland. Since 1801, Congress and the nation have not allowed DC voting rights in Congress. DC residents gained the right to vote for President in 1960 when Congress passed and the states ratified the 23rd Amendment to the Constitution. In 1970, DC gained a nonvoting delegate to the House of Representatives.

The local DC government is unique in that it is responsible for most state, county, and city functions all within one government with an elected chief executive (mayor) and legislature (council). DC, once several cities and two counties, now has over 120 neighborhoods with a population of nearly 600,000 permanent residents - more than the number of residents living in Wyoming. Like DC, seven states have fewer than one million residents. Fifteen states have fewer than two million residents.

According to legal scholar Jamin Raskin, the federal government defines DC as a state in over 500 provisions of the U.S. Code, and treats DC as if it were a state in every way except with respect for political and civil rights and basic power of self-government. DC residents pay federal, DC ("state"), and local taxes. The municipal budget is funded by DC and local taxes. Like states, DC receives federal grant money for specific federal programs for which it qualifies. Although the federal government attracts tourists and is an important part of the regional economic engine, it imposes costs on the DC government for which it does not compensate.

Economically, DC ranks higher than 15 states in Gross State Product (GSP). GSP is a broad measure of overall aggregate economic activity. It is the most important economic indicator of a state.

- DC generates a higher proportion of GSP from private industry than twelve states - 63 percent of DC's GSP is derived from private industry.
- Thirty-seven percent of DC's GSP is generated from government-associated activities, 33 percent of which is federal and military. Fifteen states, including neighboring Virginia and Maryland, generate more GSP from government sources than DC.

**Over, please...**

**Populations and Economies of U.S. States and the District of Columbia  
Ranked by Descending Population Size**

	<b>Gross State Product (GSP)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Votes in Senate</b>	<b>Votes in House</b>
<b>National Total</b>	<b>9,941,552</b>	<b>281.424 million</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>435</b>
California	1,344,623	32.667 million	2	53
Texas	742,274	20.904 million	2	32
New York	799,202	19.005 million	2	29
Florida	472,105	16.029 million	2	25
Illinois	467,284	12.439 million	2	19
Pennsylvania	403,985	12.301 million	2	19
Ohio	372,640	11.375 million	2	18
Michigan	325,384	9.956 million	2	15
New Jersey	363,089	8.424 million	2	13
Georgia	296,142	8.207 million	2	13
North Carolina	281,741	8.068 million	2	13
Virginia	261,355	7.101 million	2	11
Massachusetts	284,934	6.356 million	2	10
Indiana	192,195	6.091 million	2	9
Washington (state)	219,937	5.909 million	2	9
Tennessee	178,362	5.700 million	2	9
Missouri	178,845	5.606 million	2	9
Wisconsin	173,478	5.371 million	2	8
Maryland	186,108	5.308 million	2	8
Arizona	156,303	5.141 million	2	8
Minnesota	184,766	4.926 million	2	8
Louisiana	137,700	4.480 million	2	7
Alabama	119,921	4.461 million	2	7
Colorado	167,918	4.312 million	2	7
Kentucky	118,508	4.049 million	2	6
South Carolina	113,377	4.025 million	2	6
Oklahoma	91,773	3.459 million	2	5
Oregon	118,637	3.429 million	2	5
Connecticut	159,288	3.410 million	2	5
Iowa	89,600	2.932 million	2	5
Mississippi	67,315	2.853 million	2	4
Kansas	85,063	2.694 million	2	4
Arkansas	67,724	2.680 million	2	4
Utah	68,549	2.237 million	2	3
Nevada	74,745	2.002 million	2	3
New Mexico	54,364	1.824 million	2	3
West Virginia	42,271	1.813 million	2	3
Nebraska	56,072	1.715 million	2	3
Idaho	37,031	1.297 million	2	2
Maine	35,981	1.278 million	2	2
New Hampshire	47,708	1.238 million	2	2
Hawaii	42,364	1.217 million	2	2
Rhode Island	36,453	1.050 million	2	2
Montana	21,777	905 thousand	2	1
Delaware	36,336	785 thousand	2	1
South Dakota	23,192	758 thousand	2	1
North Dakota	18,283	644 thousand	2	1
Alaska	27,747	614 thousand	2	1
Vermont	18,411	610 thousand	2	1
<b>District of Columbia</b>	<b>59,397</b>	<b>572 thousand</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Wyoming	19,294	495 thousand	2	1

(Sources: U.S. Census 2000; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2000)