



DC's GLBT Community & Congressional Voting Rights

www.dcvote.org

DC Vote and DC's Denial of Congressional Voting Representation

The United States of America was founded on the principle that the people have an inalienable right to shape the laws under which they live. Sadly, that is not a right shared by those who live in our nation's capital. Nearly 600,000 DC residents pay federal income taxes, serve on juries, and die in wars to defend American democracy, but do not have voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate.

DC Vote is a 501 (c) (3) educational and advocacy organization dedicated to securing full voting representation in Congress for the residents of the District of Columbia.

Impact on DC's GLBT Community

- **Social Restrictions and Budgetary Riders:** The most common way that Congress interferes in DC's local laws and policies is through the addition of restrictions or 'riders' on DC's budget. Most congressional interference involves social issues and many of those issues disproportionately affect the GLBT community. Without regard for Washingtonians, members of Congress impose the views of their constituents on the District to win votes back home. In spite of overwhelming support from the people and elected officials of the District of Columbia, Congress has interfered with important issues of local political autonomy including:
 - Domestic partnership laws and policy
 - Women's and reproductive health
 - Effective, proven programs to decrease HIV transmission
 - Laws to allow for medical relief for those suffering in pain
- **Pursuit of Happiness:** DC has one of the largest per capita GLBT populations in the country, and a significant number of GLBT policy and advocacy groups are located in the nation's capital. The members of DC's GLBT community, as with all DC residents, are without a vote on the most important issues that affect their daily lives and the lives of those they work to serve.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** Residents of the District of Columbia have no rights under Article V of the U.S. Constitution – this means that DC residents are the only Americans who do not have a say in the ratification of amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Ironically, the 23rd Amendment, which first allowed DC residents to vote for president and vice president, was passed without a vote from DC. If Congress passed an amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, the people living in DC would be without a vote.
- **Presidential Appointments and Judicial Nominees:** The U.S. Senate is the only legislative body that discusses, deliberates and votes on presidential nominees. District residents have no voice or vote when it comes to the appointment of judges to the U.S. Supreme Court; the appointment of judges on federal courts in DC and across the country; the confirmation of cabinet appointees, ambassadors and others.

What You Can Do

For more information on DC voting rights and how you can get involved, visit www.dcvote.org. On the Web site, you can also become a member of DC Vote and join the growing number of people who believe in American democracy for America's capital.