



“It’s Time” Educational Video Transcript
Total Running Time – 5:30

Female Narrator:

No country was founded on more noble principles than the United States of America. In the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson wrote that governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, a radical statement in 1776, a revered American ideal today. Democracy and freedom swept across America beginning in the late 18th century. By the end of the 20th century they had swept across the world. For over 200 years, we have worked to expand participation in our democracy granting women, minorities, and young people the right to vote. With each expansion we have become a stronger nation and a beacon of freedom for the world. Today, whether you live in an apartment building in New York City or a farm in Missouri, we all have a voice in the decisions that affect our lives. The right to vote is treasured by all Americans. As one suffragist said, “How can we give the consent of the governed if the right to vote is denied?”

Imagine if you and your neighbors lost the right to vote for members of Congress. What if you paid the third highest amount of federal taxes per capita in the nation but had no say in how that money is spent? No votes on health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, the environment, the economy. What if you obeyed the laws of the United States and had no hand in what those laws are, no voice in approving judges who interpret the law?

What if your children could be drafted into military service but you could not vote for the people who decide whether or not we go to war?

What if you lived in the only national capital of a democracy, in the world, where you could not vote for the national legislature?

This is the unimaginable reality for over half a million American citizens living in the District of Columbia. But it wasn’t always the case.

In 1791, Maryland and Virginia ceded land to the federal government to build the new nation’s capital and for about 10 years the who people who lived in this newly created “District of Columbia” continued to vote in the Maryland’s or Virginia’s federal elections. But Maryland and Virginia later decided that since DC had its own local government, they should no longer vote in their elections. This decision was made independently by their states and had nothing to do with any decisions made by the federal government or dictates of the constitution. Incredibly, almost 200 years after losing their vote, DC residents are still in limbo. But Washington’s reality is not its destiny.

The voting rights movement in DC has been gaining momentum since the 1970s. In 1978, the Full Voting Rights Amendment passed overwhelmingly in both houses of Congress and was supported by the president, failing only to be ratified by enough states. A number of court cases have been filed on behalf of DC residents and in 1999 a federal lawsuit was brought to establish a constitutional right to representation. There are four different ways to provide representation in Congress to DC residents.

Statehood, treating DC as though it were a state for the purposes of representation.

Going back and becoming part of Maryland, called “retrocession”.

Or going back and treating DC as though it were a part of Maryland for purposes of representation.

Each of these solutions is legal and would provide American citizens living in the District of Columbia with the same rights as our fellow citizens. Not special rights, the same rights. The Coalition for DC Representation in Congress Education Fund, or “DC Vote”, was founded to educate the public and the Congress about the necessity for citizens of the District of Columbia to enjoy full voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

The coalition brings together all people and organizations that support the constitutional guarantee of democratic representation for all citizens.

Join us. Sign our petition. Send a donation. Help educate your community. Full voting rights for the District of Columbia. It’s constitutional. It’s American. It’s time.

[Fade to DC Vote’s web address – www.dcvote.org]

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