Constitutional Amendment for Full Congressional Voting Representation for the District of Columbia

[The following is an excerpt from the Congressional Record for May 11, 1961. The Mr. BUSH of reference is U.S. Senator Prescott Bush (R-CT), grandfather of George W. Bush, the current President of the United States of America.]

Mr. BUSH. Mr. President, I introduce, for appropriate reference, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to grant representation in the Congress to the people of the District of Columbia; and I ask that the joint resolution be held at the desk for additional sponsors, through next Tuesday.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The joint resolution will be received and appropriately referred; and, without objection, the joint resolution will lie on the desk, as requested by the Senator from Connecticut.

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 85) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to grant representation in the Congress, introduced by Mr. BUSH, was received, read twice by its title, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BUSH. Mr. President I have always felt that the District of Columbia should be the model of perfection in municipal government, and showplace for our Nation for all who visit the National Capital to see. Foreign visitors to the United States almost invariably come to Washington. American citizens from all over the United States come here with their children, to see the Nation’s Capital. They should see the very best in municipal government at work.

But Congress has treated the District with slight consideration. We have treated it like a stepchild, in comparison with the way we have treated other States.

Yet, Mr. President, the District has a population of approximately 764,000, which exceeds the population of 11 States which now are represented by two U.S. Senators each and have proportionate representation in the House.


Some of these States actually vote less than 100,000 ballots in statewide elections. Yet they have two Senators and proportionate representation in the House, while the District is denied a voice in the Congress.

As a result of ratification of the 23rd amendment, the people of the District are now entitled to vote for President and Vice President.

This is not enough. They should also be entitled to representation in the Congress. Indeed, representation in the Congress would be much more valuable to the citizens of the District of Columbia than the simple privilege of voting for President and Vice President of the United States. I believe the effectiveness of representation in the Congress, in the interest of the citizens of the District of Columbia, would be much greater.

Various proposals for home rule in the District have been made. I have opposed these proposals, and I still do. Because of the large ownership of property in the District by the federal Government, and because of the great impact which activities of the Federal Government have upon the District’s affairs, I believe that representation in Congress would provide a better method of insuring fair treatment of the District’s residents, and at the same time would protect the interests of the U.S. Government. Two U.S. Senators and Representatives in the House could act as effective spokesmen for the people of the District, and could make certain that the interests of the District were adequately considered by the Congress.