



# Six Popular Myths about the District of Columbia

○ **MYTH #1: Most people in D.C. work for the government and the military.**

Federal officials represent a small proportion of the District's population. D.C. is home to almost 660,000 people of all backgrounds and occupations, and most have lived there for over 20 years. D.C.'s 120 vibrant neighborhoods each have their own rich, distinct cultural heritage.

○ **MYTH #2: District residents don't pay U.S. taxes but D.C. gets lots of federal money.**

Washingtonians not only pay federal income taxes, they pay at the highest per-capita rate in the country. In addition, residents pay "statelike," or District taxes - which must be approved by Congress. Eight states receive more federal funds as a percentage of their budgets than D.C.

○ **MYTH #3: D.C. citizens enjoy the same rights as other Americans.**

Although Washingtonians pay federal income taxes, fight in America's wars and serve on its juries, they have no voting representation in Congress. Also, unlike anywhere else in the country, Congress must approve the local budget and every local law.

○ **MYTH #4: Proximity to the Capitol boosts influence of D.C. residents.**

In the age of global communications, proximity does not mean access. Most federal officials know more about their home districts or international affairs than about local D.C. issues.

○ **MYTH #5: D.C. is too small to have representation.**

Washington, D.C. is 63 square miles and has a larger population than Wyoming and Vermont. All states - regardless of size - have equal representation in the Senate.

○ **MYTH #6: D.C. is treated differently because it belongs to all Americans.**

The area around the National Mall - a very small portion of the District - is home to Congress, the White House and other national landmarks. However, D.C. is mostly made up of 120 unique neighborhoods that tourists never see. Eight states have a higher percentage of federal land ownership than Washington, D.C.