



D.C. Delegation Continues Push for Voting Rights and Statehood at DNC

By Martin Austermuhle, DCist, September 4, 2012

They didn't get very far at the Republican National Convention in Tampa, but a delegation of statehood and voting rights activists from D.C. will push their cause at the Democratic National Convention, which kicks off in Charlotte today.

This afternoon Mayor Vince Gray will join the activists and members of D.C.'s delegation to the DNC at a rally in support of budget autonomy, which picked up steam on Capitol Hill this year but was again derailed by Republican amendments related to abortion rights in the city.

The delegation will also push for statehood to be explicitly included in the official Democratic Party platform, as it was for 16 years until 2004. To that end, **Shadow Senator Michael Brown** and Shadow Representative Mike Panetta spent \$7,500 on two pro-statehood billboards in **Charlotte**. The text of the platform doesn't go as far as using the word, but it conveys much of the same message:

Every citizen of the United States is entitled to equal citizenship rights, including the 638,000 residents of the nation's capital who pay federal taxes without representation. The American citizens who live in Washington, D.C., like the citizens of the 50 states, should have full and equal congressional rights and the right to have the laws and budget of their local government respected without congressional interference.

Still, statehood advocates want the platform to explicitly say that D.C. should be allowed to become the 51st state, as it did in 2000: "The citizens of the District of Columbia are entitled to autonomy in the conduct of their civic affairs, full political representation as Americans who are fully taxed, and statehood."