



D.C. deserves statehood

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On behalf of the 646,000 loyal American citizens I represent in the Washington, D.C., I feel compelled to write in response to Rik Stevens's article, "N.H. lawmakers throw support to D.C. voting rights" (*Monitor Local & State* section, Feb. 21).

I have testified before the New Hampshire House Committee on State-Federal and Veterans Affairs twice on similar resolutions offered by Rep. Cindy Rosenwald and appreciate her attempt to garner support for the rights of my constituents. I agree that we should all "demand the same level of representative democracy for fellow Americans who live in our great nation's capital" as you have in New Hampshire. I would be remiss, however, if I did not point out that the equality she seeks can only come through statehood.

Voting rights granted by Congress can be taken away and will not resolve the current inequity of no budget or legal autonomy for District of Columbia. Only statehood is permanent and provides the equality that is a prerequisite of our democracy. Without statehood the loyal citizens of our nation's capital who have fought and died in every war, pay the highest taxes per capita in America and in every respect are exemplary citizens will never be equal.

In 1902 New Hampshire Sen. Jacob Gallinger introduced a resolution to make D.C. a state. Today the District has a statehood bill in both houses of Congress. To date, no New Hampshire legislator is a cosponsor. Despite Rosenwald's good intentions, encouraging her fellow lawmakers to support the "New Columbia Admission Act" would be more appropriate.

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(The writer is the elected shadow senator for the District of Columbia.)