



Chronology of the District of Columbia's Denial of Democracy

June 1783: In Philadelphia, a crowd of soldiers protested in front of the building where Congress was meeting, prompting the members to adjourn their proceedings after Pennsylvania authorities refused to protect the Continental Congress. In September of that same year, the Continental Congress appointed a committee chaired by James Madison to consider the amount of control that the Continental Congress should have over its seat. The committee's report recommended that the national legislature should maintain "exclusive jurisdiction" over a capital district.

September 17, 1787: The constitution is ratified at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention. The constitution provides for creation of a separate national capital, and the search begins for a site. Delegates to the Convention wanted to separate the federal capital from a state capital, and also wished to allow Congress to protect itself by endowing it with police power over the District.

1787: The [U.S. Constitution](#) is ratified. [Article I, Section 8](#), Clause 17 gives the U.S. Congress the power "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over such capital district." The area where the new capital would be located has not yet been fixed.

1790: [The site for the new capital district is selected.](#) Combining land from Maryland and Virginia to form the District of Columbia, area residents continue to vote in, and even run for Congress from, their former states.

January 24, 1791: President Washington selects a site that includes portions of Maryland and Virginia.

1793 - 1794: [Uriah Forrest](#), a resident of Georgetown is elected to serve from Maryland in the U.S. House of Representatives.

February 27, 1801: In the Organic Act of 1801, Congress divides the District into the counties of Washington (former Maryland area) and Alexandria (former Virginia area). Congress assumes jurisdiction over the District of Columbia from territory ceded by Maryland and Virginia, and did not provide for voting representation for residents. With the passage of the Organic Act of 1801, residents of the nation's capital were denied the right to representation they had shared with their fellow



countrymen. Representation was taken away from these citizens - a fact that few realize.

July 9, 1846: Congress passes a law returning the city of Alexandria and Alexandria County to the state of Virginia. DC residents living in the former Virginia portion of the District (about one-third of DC) retroceded to Virginia. The state of Virginia requested, the federal government approved, and the citizens of the portion of the District south of the Potomac River agreed to merge back into that state. The citizens of Alexandria Town, the State of Virginia, Congress, and the President approved of the decision to fragment George Washington's original "diamond." The citizens of Alexandria County did not approve, but they were few in number. The residents of Washington City, Washington County, and Georgetown were not allowed to vote on the matter.

April 16, 1862: Congress abolishes slavery in the federal district (City of Washington, Washington County, and Georgetown).

1961: The 23rd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, granting DC residents the right to vote in U.S. Presidential elections for the first time ever. In spite of a population of over 700,000 people, the District is limited to the same number of electors as that of the smallest state. The amendment was opposed by all border and southern states, except Tennessee.

1964: DC residents vote in overwhelming numbers in their first U.S. Presidential Election ever.

April 22, 1968: District residents receive the right to elect a Board of Education.

December 24, 1973: Congress passes and President signs District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act-a.k.a. the "Home Rule Act." Provides for popularly elected mayor, 13-member Council with legislative authority over "all rightful subjects of legislation," with restrictions-prohibits taxing federal property, federal exemptions, or income of non-District residents who work in the District; changing height limitation for buildings; altering court system, or changing the criminal code until 1977, after which time any changes could be vetoed by single House of Congress. On all legislative acts of Council, Congress retains right to review and overturn if both houses vote within 30 legislative days. District budget requires



approval of Congress and President. President appoints District judges from list of three nominees per position, provided by 7-member Judicial Nominating Commission. A "floating" federal payment for services and tax-exempt status continued. In 1974, District citizens approved the partial home rule charter.

May 7, 1974: Voters of the District of Columbia approve by referendum the District Charter and the establishment of advisory neighborhood commissions. General elections are held for mayor and council on November 5, 1974.

1974: On September 10, 1974, DC holds a primary election, and on November 5, 1974, DC holds general elections for DC Mayor and the DC City Council. Walter E. Washington is elected DC's first mayor under the new system.

August 22, 1978: With overwhelming bipartisan support, both chambers of Congress pass the DC Voting Rights Constitutional Amendment, which would give District residents voting representation in the House and the Senate, by two-thirds majority in each chamber. The amendment will require 38 states to ratify it before it becomes effective. Congress places a seven-year time limit on ratification.

November 4, 1980: District electors approve the District of Columbia Statehood Constitutional Convention of 1979, which became DC law and which called for convening a state constitutional convention.

November 2, 1982: After the constitutional convention, a Constitution for the State of New Columbia is ratified by District voters.

1985: The DC Voting Rights Constitutional Amendment fails. The amendment only receives 16 of the required 38 states for ratification. Delaware is the last state to ratify the amendment.

1998: DC Vote is founded to serve as an educational and advocacy organization whose mission is to secure full voting representation in the Congress for the residents of the District of Columbia.

2000: By a vote of 2 - 1, a Federal appeals court rejects a case brought by residents of the District of Columbia to gain full voting representation in Congress. The U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the case on appeal.



The city of Washington, DC, adopts a new license plate motto Taxation Without Representation to go on all newly printed license plates for vehicles.

March 23, 2001: The "No Taxation Without Representation Act of 2001" is introduced by Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.). The bill states that notwithstanding any other provision of law, the community of American citizens who are residents of the District constituting the seat of government of the United States shall have full voting representation in the Congress. The bill would also amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide a tax exemption to District of Columbia residents for years during which such residents do not have full voting representation in the Congress.

June 2004: Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) introduces the District of Columbia Fairness in Representation Act (DC FAIR Act), which would provide DC with a voting member in the House along with a seat for Republican-leaning Utah.

March 9, 2007: Rep. Davis and Del. Norton introduce the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007 (H.R.1433) to provide a voting representative in the House for Washington, DC. The bill also allows for an additional House seat for Utah.

April 19, 2007: The District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007 (now H.R.1905) passes the House.

September 18, 2007: In a procedural vote on the DC House Voting Rights Act (S.1257), a small group of Senators blocked the bill from being debated with a vote of 57 yeas - 42 nays. In order to overcome a filibuster, 60 votes are required. It is the first filibuster of voting rights legislation since the days of segregation.

February 26, 2009: the DC Voting Rights Act passed in the Senate, with a filibuster-proof majority of 61 votes. For the first time in 31 years, a DC voting rights bill passed the Senate, but at the last minute, a gun amendment was attached to the bill and made progress in the 111th Congress impossible.

July 2010: DC's local budget was enacted by Congress free from any riders limiting how local funds could be spent.



April 11, 2011: DC Vote led unprecedented protests to defend and promote DC's right to local control over local decisions. Forty-one (41) DC residents are arrested for protesting Congressional attacks on DC's local budget.

2012: DC Vote defended against attacks on Home Rule launched by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ) who introduced a bill to ban all abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy only in the District by holding protests in both DC and Franks' home district.

January 2013: After a DC Vote-led petition, President Obama ordered the District's Taxation Without Representation license plates be placed on the Presidential limousine.

April 23, 2013: A local budget autonomy referendum launched by DC Vote was supported by 83 percent of District voters. The referendum moved to give the District greater control over its local tax dollars.

December 2014: The House and Senate approve the "CRomnibus" appropriations bill which includes language intended to negate the District's recently passed initiative to legalize marijuana which was supported by 70% of District voters. District residents vocally protested this action and the initiative was enacted in defiance of Congress.

March 18, 2015: Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and James Lankford (R-OK), at the behest of the Heritage Foundation, introduce resolutions of disapproval in an attempt to block two District laws that would increase LGBT rights and end workplace discrimination around reproductive health decisions.