

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

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HJ 8/20 – HRU

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By: **Delegate Acevero**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2021

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **United States of America – District of Columbia – Statehood**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the members of the United States Congress to enact federal
4 legislation or propose a constitutional amendment granting legislative autonomy
5 and statehood to the District of Columbia; providing that copies of this Resolution be
6 sent to certain persons; and generally relating to the granting of statehood for the
7 District of Columbia.

8 WHEREAS, The people living on the land that would eventually be designated as
9 the District of Columbia were provided the right to vote for representation in Congress
10 when the United States Constitution was ratified in 1788; and

11 WHEREAS, The passage of the Organic Act of 1801 placed the District of Columbia
12 under the exclusive authority of the United States Congress and abolished residents' right
13 to vote for members of Congress and the President and Vice President of the United States;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Residents of the District of Columbia were granted the right to vote for
16 the President and Vice President through passage of the Twenty-Third Amendment to the
17 United States Constitution in 1961; and

18 WHEREAS, As of 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau data estimates that the District of
19 Columbia's population at approximately 705,000 residents is comparable to the populations
20 of Wyoming (578,000), Vermont (624,000), North Dakota (762,000), and Alaska (731,000);
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Residents of the District of Columbia share all the responsibilities of
23 United States citizenship, including paying more federal taxes than residents of 22 states,
24 service on federal juries, and defending the United States as members of the United States
25 armed forces in every war since the War for Independence, yet they are denied full
26 representation in Congress; and



1 WHEREAS, The residents of the District of Columbia themselves have endorsed
2 statehood for the District of Columbia and passed a District-wide referendum on budget
3 autonomy; and

4 WHEREAS, No other democratic nation denies the right of self-government,
5 including participation in its national legislature, to the residents of its capital; and

6 WHEREAS, The residents of the District of Columbia lack full democracy, equality,
7 and citizenship enjoyed by the residents of the 50 states; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States Congress repeatedly has interfered with the District
9 of Columbia's limited self-government by enacting laws that affect the District of
10 Columbia's expenditure of its locally raised tax revenue, including barring the usage of
11 locally raised revenue, thus violating the fundamental principle that states and local
12 governments are best suited to enact legislation that represents the will of their citizens;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Although the District of Columbia has passed 24 consecutive balanced
15 budgets, it still faces the possibility of being shut down yearly because of Congressional
16 deliberations over the federal budget; and

17 WHEREAS, District of Columbia Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced in the
18 116th Congress H.R. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act, that provides that the State
19 of Washington, D.C. would have all the rights of citizenship as taxpaying American citizens,
20 including two Senators and at least one House member; and

21 WHEREAS, The United Nations Human Rights Committee has called on the United
22 States Congress to address the District of Columbia's lack of political equality, and the
23 Organization of American States has declared the disenfranchisement of the District of
24 Columbia residents a violation of its charter agreement, to which the United States is a
25 signatory; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the members
27 of the United States Congress are urged to enact federal legislation or propose a
28 constitutional amendment granting legislative autonomy and statehood to the District of
29 Columbia; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That certified copies of this Joint Resolution be sent by the Secretary
31 of State to: the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America, 1600
32 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20500; the Honorable Kamala Harris, Vice
33 President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Suite
34 S-212, United States Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Patrick
35 Leahy, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, 437 Russell Senate Office
36 Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Chuck Schumer, United States Senate
37 Majority Leader, 322 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable
38 Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, 1236 Longworth
39 House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and the Honorable Eleanor Holmes

1 Norton, Delegate to the United States House of Representatives for the District of
2 Columbia, 2136 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
4 Legislative Services to the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Benjamin L.
5 Cardin and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510;
6 and Representatives Andrew P. Harris, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, John P. Sarbanes,
7 Anthony G. Brown, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, David J. Trone, Kweisi Mfume, and Jamie
8 Raskin, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
10 Legislative Services to the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the
11 Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
12 Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State is directed to send copies of this Joint
14 Resolution to the presiding officers of both Houses of the legislature of each of the several
15 states, with the request that it be circulated among leaders in the legislative branch of the
16 state governments.