

Statehood to Washington DC

April 23, 2021

In News: The House of Representatives voted to pass a bill that would give statehood to Washington, DC.

About Statehood to Washington DC

- The District of Columbia statehood movement is a political movement that advocates making the District of Columbia a U.S. state.
- To provide the taxpayers of the District of Columbia with voting representation in the Congress and full control over local affairs.
- The District of Columbia is currently a federal district under the direct jurisdiction of the United States Congress.
- Statehood for the District may be achieved by an act of Congress, under the power granted to Congress by the United States Constitution to admit new states to the Union (Article IV, Section 3, Clause 1).
- Alternative proposals to statehood include the retrocession of the District of Columbia and voting rights reforms.
- If the District of Columbia were to become a state based on 2018 figures – it would rank 49th by population, 51st by area, 1st by GDP per capita, 1st by median household income, 34th by total GDP, and the first state admitted to the union in almost 62 years.
- Based on 2019 figures, it would be ranked 1st in educational attainment with 59.7% of residents having a bachelor's degree and 34.0% having an advanced degree.
- In 2015, the District of Columbia was 1st in population density and was 9 times more dense than New Jersey 2nd most dense and 11,000 times more dense than Alaska.

- For most of the modern (1980–present) statehood movement, the new state’s name would have been “New Columbia”, although Washington, D.C.
- The Admission Act passed by the United States House of Representatives in 2020 and 2021 refers to the proposed state as the “State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth” to honor Frederick Douglass.

DC Admission Act (H.R.51)

- In March 2017, the District’s congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced Washington, DC Admission Act to propose DC statehood in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- In May 2017, the Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate.
- In February 2019, the House Democratic leadership put its support behind legislation to grant DC statehood.
- HR 1, the For the People Act of 2019, included a nonbinding expression of support, passed 234 to 193 in March 2019 on a party-line vote, with Democrats in favor and Republicans opposed.
- The George Floyd protests in June 2020 brought attention to situations of racial injustice, and President Trump’s controversial use of the DC National Guard to clear protesters from near the White House angered the city government, which, unlike the states in the United States, does not directly control its National Guard.
- On June 26, 2020, the House of Representatives passed the “Washington, DC Admission Act” 232–180 largely along party lines; Collin Peterson and Justin Amash were the only Democrat and Libertarian, respectively, to vote no.
- It died in the Republican-controlled Senate at the end of the 116th Congress.
- On January 4, 2021, Delegate Norton reintroduced HR 51 early in the 117th Congress with a record 202 co-sponsors.

- On January 26, 2021, Tom Carper of Delaware introduced a similar bill, S.51, "A bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, DC into the Union" into the United States Senate with a record 38 co-sponsors.
- Additional co-sponsors have since signed on, and as of April 14, 2021, there are 44 co-sponsors.