

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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**Ranking Member Jamie Raskin**  
**Committee on Oversight and Accountability**  
**Joint Hearing on “American Confidence in Elections: The Path to Election Integrity in the District of Columbia”**  
**June 7, 2023**

Well, what do you know, more than a week has gone by so it must be time for another hearing designed to inflict insult and injury on 700,000 disenfranchised Americans living in Washington, D.C.

Not only do our GOP colleagues want to block the statehood drive of our fellow Americans from Washington and permanently deny them voting representation in the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

Not only do they want to roll back home rule, micromanage the legislation of the D.C. Council, and blame D.C. leaders for the problems caused by their second-class political status.

**Now they want to lecture them about democratic elections and voting rights while making it far more difficult for D.C. residents to register and to vote in the elections they do have for the few offices open to them, like D.C. Council, school board, and Mayor.**

**So, while Republicans are pushing the ACE Act to empower states to clamp down on voting rights, they also seek to directly impose this extreme anti-voter, anti-democratic legislation as a political straitjacket on the people of the District of Columbia.**

While Republicans claim to be advancing ‘election integrity,’ the bill’s obvious aim is to disenfranchise people.

There is a history of this. In Democracy in America, Tocqueville said that democracy in America is either shrinking and constricting or growing and expanding.

Republicans have thrown away the legacy of Lincoln and now embrace the Big Lies and electoral corruption and manipulation of Donald Trump, who runs their party like an authoritarian cult of personality.

Instead of bringing the people of Washington, D.C. into the Union on an equal footing with people in the 50 states, they seek to bring the disenfranchisement and political marginalization afflicting D.C. to people all over the country with their proposals for tactical voter suppression, election repression, and registration depression.

And what’s the justification for their sledgehammer attack on local elections in Washington?

There is none.

**D.C. already has free, fair, and secure elections for the public offices open to the people.**

**In fact, D.C. has some of the most accessible and secure elections in the United States. Through its pro-voter laws, D.C. has one of the highest registered voter rates in the country.**

**The Heritage Foundation's "Election Fraud Cases" database identifies exactly zero instances of voter fraud in D.C. since 1979. That's no election fraud in the last 44 years. D.C.'s strong pro-voter policies are clearly conducive to election integrity and have not led to voter fraud.**

**The only plausible reason for this legislation, therefore, is for people who know nothing about Washington beyond Capitol Hill to use D.C. as a whipping post, a guinea pig, and a sacrificial lamb in the effort to constrict the vote and depress participation nationally.**

With this embarrassing hearing, Republicans have moved from the macro-suppression of representation, voting rights and political voice in Washington, D.C. to the micro-suppression of local voting rights to keep people from even getting to the polls to cast ballots for candidates for the few offices D.C. residents are actually allowed to fill.

This bill is unnecessary, unfair, undemocratic, and unworthy of this body.

Nearly 700,000 U.S. citizens living in Washington, D.C. pay more federal taxes per capita than the residents of each of the 50 states. They have fought in every U.S. war. They are draftable. They are subject to all the laws of the country. Against all odds, without the power to select their own judges or prosecutors or make their own budgets without outside interference, they have made genuine progress in their community. And they have petitioned for admission to the Union, submitting the kind of statehood petition Congress has accepted 37 other times. The House of Representatives voted for D.C. Statehood in the last two Congresses.

The effort to shrink the electorate, like the effort to keep the people of D.C. from joining the Union, cuts against the grain of one person-one vote democracy.

In *Carrington v. Rash*, the Supreme Court in 1965 struck down Texas' law keeping military personnel from voting in state elections on the grounds that they were not sufficiently integrated into the Texas political culture to vote responsibly. The Supreme Court found that it violates Equal Protection to "fence out" part of the population from voting because of predictions of how they will vote.

**These continuing right-wing attacks on democracy in D.C. reflect an effort to disparage the equal rights of Washingtonians. The GOP wants to deny Americans who live in D.C. the right to fully participate in representative government and then blame them for the problems caused by their own disenfranchisement.**

But I want to thank the witnesses for appearing here today.

**I also want to thank the people of the District of Columbia for your determination and patience. You are the only residents of a national Capital on planet earth who are disenfranchised in your own national legislature.**

Can you imagine if they didn't allow the residents of Paris to be represented in L'Assemble Nationale because they live in the capital city? They'd have another French Revolution on their hands.

**But Democrats will never stop fighting to protect your right to vote and to be represented and your right to achieve a status of true political equality and freedom in the Union.**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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