



June 24, 2020

Dear Representative,

The SPLC Action Fund is dedicated to fighting for racial justice alongside impacted communities in pursuit of equity and opportunity for all. We work primarily in the Southeast United States where we have offices in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C. The SPLC Action Fund promotes policies and laws that will eliminate the structural racism and inequalities that fuel oppression of people of color, immigrants, young people, women, low-income people, and the LGBTQ+ community.

I write to urge you to support H.R. 51, the "Washington, D.C. Admission Act." This legislation is designed to address the fundamentally undemocratic situation in which residents of the District of Columbia have no voting representatives in House and Senate who can advocate on behalf of their rights. This deeply-objectionable taxation without representation is fundamentally contrary to our nation's democratic values and ideals.

D.C. residents have been denied full representation in Congress, restricted to one non-voting Delegate to the US House of Representatives who can draft legislation but cannot cast a vote on behalf of the more than 700,000 taxpayers in the District of Columbia – more residents than Wyoming or Vermont, states with voting Representatives in the House and two Senators each. The District of Columbia has no voice whatsoever in the Senate, denying residents any say in the officials confirmed to federal agency leadership positions, federal judges, Ambassadors to foreign countries, or Justices on the Supreme Court.

It is critical to understand that this issue disproportionately impacts the Black community, because, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, almost half of the people living in D.C. identify themselves as being Black Americans, a far higher percentage than the thirteen percent of the overall American population.

The District of Columbia is the only capital of a democratic nation that denies its residents full representation. In recent weeks, D.C. residents' relative powerlessness was, again, dramatically demonstrated when the District received less COVID-19 stimulus funding than any other state – at a time when coronavirus cases in the city were climbing – and when federal law enforcement officials, some without name badges or any identifying insignia, violently confronted people on D.C. streets protesting police misconduct and systematic racism.

For over 200 years, residents of the District of Columbia have lived at the heart of our federal government, but have been mere spectators, not full participants, in critical national debates affecting their day-to-day lives: war and peace, taxes and spending, health care policy, educational equity, immigration policy, needed criminal justice reform, and the environment.

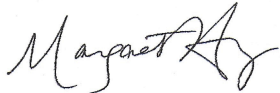
As the United States Supreme Court said in *Wesberry v. Sanders* in 1964:

"No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined."

It is time to end this discriminatory disenfranchisement. It's wrong for Members of Congress who represent states far from Washington, D.C. to impose their own political views on D.C. residents.

We urge you to end this second-class citizenship and to support H.R. 51 to provide full congressional representation for D.C. residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Huang", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Huang  
President and CEO