

# **U.S. PUBLIC OPINION**

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*on Principles of*

# **GOVERNANCE**

*for*

# **WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Report based on 1,049 telephone interviews  
with U.S. adults between September 12-14, 1997.  
Margin of error:  $\pm 3.2$  percentage points.

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## PREFACE

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This study is part of my effort to understand the history of the relationship between the U.S. federal government and the residents of the District of Columbia, and the effort and issues associated with District resident's 200 year struggle to continue to host the capital and respect federal interests, and also become full citizens of the United States. I was prompted to conduct this study of American public opinion about PRINCIPLES for governing Washington, D.C. because:

I became frustrated that there was so little opinion data on this subject.

I have heard residents comment that nobody cares about this issue; or that people in the states don't want us to have the same rights as they do. I wanted to know if this was an accurate perception or not.

The U.S. Congress has the authority under the U.S. Constitution to give residents of George Washington's federal city equal voting rights. I wanted to know what their constituents thought.

The findings show that there is agreement on the basic principles, and this is reassuring. But HOW District residents can achieve these principles is a more complex and controversial question. It is hoped that this report will stimulate discussion about how we can both be true to American principles *and* also satisfy the federal government's needs.

I dedicate this report to:

The residents of the District of Columbia, who have contributed honorably, loyally, and graciously to our nation's federal city and who will one day get their wish.

My parents, Christian missionaries in Mali for nearly twenty-five years, who showed me this beautiful and tragic world, made me aware of the value and challenges of the American representative democracy, explained my responsibility in the world, and taught me that a people without a vision perish.

My mentor and boss, Ann Stouffer Bisconti, who has always respected my opinion, even when we disagree, has provided encouragement and insight, and is an outstanding example of civic and personal virtue.

My doctoral adviser, Colin Greer, who encourages us to face our ideals and to be awake, and who encouraged me to conduct this research, even when I had doubts.

My family and friends for giving me courage, freedom, and for making life a pleasure.

--Mark Richards

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	Page
<b>Purpose &amp; Method</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Study objectives</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Research design</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Sample composition</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Findings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Summary of findings</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Findings at a glance</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Graphs showing distribution of responses</b>	<b>15</b>
Voting rights District residents should have	15
Intervention as a solution if local government is	
mismanaged	16
The District as showcase of American democracy	17
<b>Tables of demographic comparisons</b>	<b>18</b>
Congressional voting rights for District residents	18
Local self-government for District residents	19
Federal takeover as solution for District government	
mismanagement	20
Federal or state takeover as solution for	
mismanagement of respondent's local government	21
Principles of our American democracy	22
Local self-government as an example of democracy	23
<b>Historical Public Opinion Data</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>The Historical Context</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Select Bibliography</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Local Governance Timeline</b>	<b>50</b>

# PURPOSE & METHOD

Study objectives  
Research design  
Sample composition

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES**

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There is very little nationally projectable public opinion data on how the city of Washington, D.C. should be governed. This study examines what voting rights Americans living in the fifty U.S. states think should be granted to U.S. citizens living in the District of Columbia.

Specifically, the survey was designed to:

Understand public opinion on how the District should be governed;

Determine if there is support for granting American citizens who live in the city of Washington, D.C. the same voting rights as those living in the states;

Learn if the public would be in support of or in opposition to having the federal government take over the local government of Washington, D.C. if it is mismanaged by local officials, because it is the nation's capital;

Learn if the public would be in support of or in opposition to having the federal or their state government take over their local government if it is mismanaged by local officials, and see if there is a difference in how they feel about this action in their area compared to the same action in Washington, D.C.;

Determine if the public feels there is a link between the right to local self-government in the city of Washington, D.C. and American democracy, or whether Washington, D.C. is considered different because it is the nation's capital.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

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### Questionnaire Design

Mark Richards conducted a data search in The Roper Center's comprehensive database of historic public opinion to determine what quantitative research is publicly available on this subject (see Historical Opinion Data).

Richards designed the questionnaire. Due to budget constraints and the likelihood that many Americans are uninformed about this issue, he only asked questions about *principles* for governing the District (what SHOULD be). He did not ask questions that require more knowledge (such as *HOW TO* achieve the principles, including passing a Constitutional Amendment, becoming a state, or retrocession to Maryland).

To improve the questions (by eliminating ambiguities and making them straightforward and clear so they are not hard to interpret), he asked four professional public opinion researchers with differing views on Washington, D.C. to review them:

Ann Stouffer Bisconti, Ph.D., President, Bisconti Research, Inc. (Maryland resident),  
Joel Henkin, Senior Vice President, Bruskin/Goldring Research (New Jersey resident),  
Rebecca Colwell Quarles, Ph.D., President, QS&A Research and Strategy (Virginia resident), and  
Rosita Thomas, Ph.D., Vice President of Research Operations, Frederick Schneiders Research (Virginia resident).

The questionnaire was modified based on their critique and discussion. **It is important to read the full questions and to look at the order in which they were asked.** The survey instrument consists of six statements that were ordered to reduce bias. Each statement was read to the survey participant and for each one they were asked if they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

The first two questions asked whether District residents should have the same voting rights in the U.S. Congress and in the local government as other U.S. citizens:

U.S. citizens who are residents of Washington, D.C. should have voting representatives in the U.S. Congress, like other U.S. citizens.

Residents of Washington, D.C. should have the right to elect their own local officials to run their city government, like other U.S. cities.

The third statement examined the acceptability of having the federal government take over the local government of Washington, D.C. if poorly managed:

If the locally-elected city government of Washington, D.C. is poorly managed, the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge because it is the nation's capital.

The fourth statement was designed to compare their attitudes about the federal government taking over the locally-elected government of Washington, D.C. to their attitudes about the same situation in their own area:

If YOUR local town or city government is poorly managed, your state or the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge.

The fifth statement tested whether Americans think that replacing locally elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of American democracy, or not:

Replacing elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of our American democracy.

The last statement tested whether the public views the federal government's choice of governance for the District as important to its stated role as a leader in the movement toward greater levels of representative democracy worldwide:

It is important that the federal government allow Washington, D.C. residents to elect their own local leaders, as an example of democracy for the world.

## **Data collection**

Telephone interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 1,049 American adults 18 years or older, between September 12-14, 1997. Forty-eight percent were men, fifty-two percent women. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that, in 95 out of 100 cases, the results did not occur by chance and are reliable within 3.2 percentage points up or down.

All interviews were conducted by skilled professional interviewers from Bruskin/Goldring Research, Inc. using an interviewing procedure known as CATI – Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing.

The people interviewed were chosen using a computer generated random digit dialing (RDD) probability sample of U.S. households with telephones, both listed and unlisted. The RDD method provides an equal probability of selection for every telephone household in the U.S. Up to five attempts were made to contact each household selected.

Bruskin/Goldring compared demographic characteristics of the sample with U.S. census estimates and corrective weights were applied where needed to ensure proper representation based upon age, education, gender, geography, and race/ethnicity.

This survey meets the standards set by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

## SAMPLE COMPOSITION

	Actual # Interviews	Census Weighted # Interviews	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	494	480	48
Women	555	520	52
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	446	520	52
Some college	280	250	25
College graduate	196	148	15
Post graduate	75	57	6
<b>Generation</b>			
G.I.	82	103	10
Silent	174	169	17
Boom	414	372	37
X/Next	335	325	33
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	146	125	13
25-34	189	200	20
35-49	326	301	30
50-64	211	175	18
65+	133	168	17
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	834	780	78
Black/African-American	110	--	11
Hispanic-American	65	--	7
Asian-American	3	--	0.3
Other	22	--	2
<b>Region</b>			
Washington, D.C. metropolitan area	22	19	2
Northeast	191	196	20
North Central	268	236	24
South	374	350	35
West	216	218	22

# FINDINGS

Summary of findings

Findings at a glance

Graphs showing distribution of  
responses

Tables of demographic comparisons

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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### **Americans overwhelmingly support equal voting rights for residents of the nation's capital – both locally and in the U.S. Congress.**

Striking majorities of Americans are of the opinion that District residents should have the right to elect their own local officials (87 percent) and have the same right to voting representation in the U.S. Congress as other U.S. citizens (79 percent).

Many Americans took very strong positions. Sixty-five percent strongly support District resident's right to elect their own local officials, and half strongly support District resident's right to have voting representatives in the U.S. Congress.

### **Americans overwhelmingly agree that Washington, D.C. should be an example of democracy for the world and that the abolition of local self-government in the federal district is a contradiction to the principles of American democracy.**

Large-majorities (78 percent) agree that *“it is important that the federal government allow Washington, D.C. residents to elect their own local leaders, as an example of democracy for the world.”* Fifty-one percent strongly agree.

Seventy-one percent agree that *“replacing elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of our American democracy.”* Fifty-one percent strongly agree.

**A majority of Americans oppose having the federal government put different leaders in charge of the capital city if it is poorly managed by the locally elected officials. Even more oppose this solution in their own area. In both cases, a plurality strongly disagree with this kind of intervention.**

**Even so, about two-fifths indicated they are willing to suspend civil liberties because of mismanagement - both in D.C. and in their area.**

A majority (51 percent) disagree that “*if the locally-elected city government of Washington, D.C. is poorly managed, the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge because it is the nation’s capital.*” A plurality (32 percent) strongly disagree. Forty-three percent agree—25 percent strongly agree.

A majority (60 percent) disagree that “*If your local town or city government is poorly managed, your state or the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge.*” A plurality (45 percent) strongly disagree. Thirty-seven percent agree—20 percent strongly agree.

## FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

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**Source:** Mark David Richards designed the study as part of his doctoral research in sociology at The Union Institute. Data were collected by Bruskin/Goldring Research, Inc. Results are based on 1,049 telephone interviews with a representative sample of U.S. adults between September 12-14, 1997. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.2$  percentage points.

### Questions and Responses

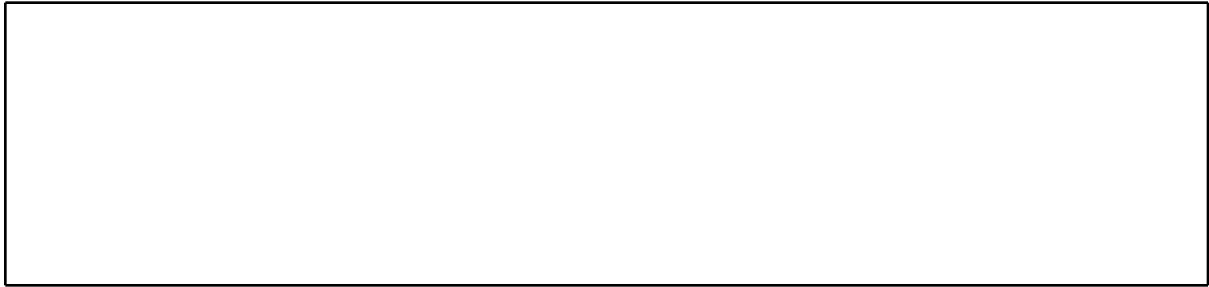
“I am going to read you some statements about Washington, D.C., where the federal government has authority to decide how that city is governed. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First...

*(Questions shown in exact order asked.)*

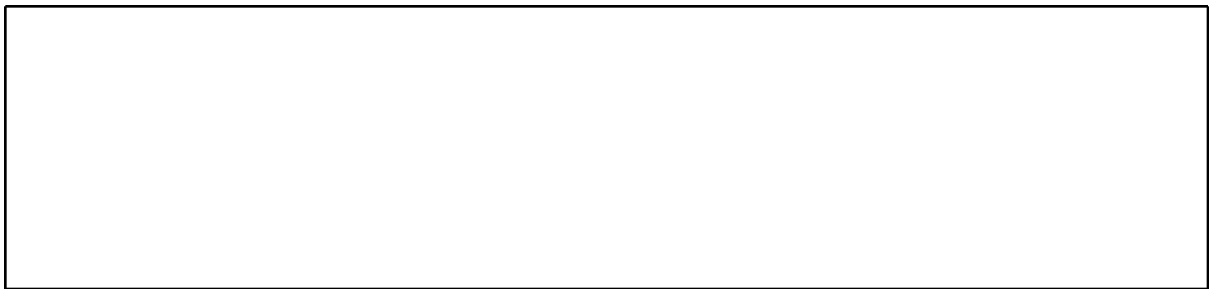
U.S. citizens who are residents of Washington, D.C. should have voting representatives in the U.S. Congress, like other U.S. citizens.

Residents of Washington, D.C. should have the right to elect their own local officials to run their city government, like other U.S. cities.

If the locally-elected city government of Washington, D.C. is poorly managed, the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge because it is the nation's capital.



If YOUR local town or city government is poorly managed, your state or the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge.



Replacing elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of our American democracy.



It is important that the federal government allow Washington, D.C. residents to elect their own local leaders, as an example of democracy for the world.





**VOTING RIGHTS**  
**DISTRICT RESIDENTS SHOULD HAVE**

---

I am going to read you some statements about Washington, D.C., where the federal government has authority to decide how that city is governed. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First... (Question number is order in which statement was read.)

U.S. citizens who are residents of Washington, D.C. should have voting representatives in the U.S. Congress, like other U.S. citizens.

Residents of Washington, D.C. should have the right to elect their own local officials to run their city government, like other U.S. cities.

**INTERVENTION AS A SOLUTION IF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS MISMANAGED**

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I am going to read you some statements about Washington, D.C., where the federal government has authority to decide how that city is governed. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First... (Question number is order in which statement was read.)

If the locally-elected city government of Washington, D.C. is poorly managed, the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge, because it is the nation's capital.

If YOUR local town or city government is poorly managed, your state or the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge.

**THE DISTRICT AS SHOWCASE OF  
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**

---

I am going to read you some statements about Washington, D.C., where the federal government has authority to decide how that city is governed. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First... (Question number is order in which statement was read.)

Replacing elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of our American democracy.

It is important that the federal government allow Washington, D.C. residents to elect their own local leaders, as an example of democracy for the world.

**CONGRESSIONAL VOTING RIGHTS  
FOR DISTRICT RESIDENTS**

---

U.S. citizens who are residents of Washington, D.C. should have voting representatives in the U.S. Congress, like other U.S. citizens.

	<b>Agree</b> (792) %	<b>Disagree</b> (151) %	<b>Don't know</b> (56) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
Men	78	20	2
Women	81	10	9
18-24	85	9	6
25-34	76	18	7
35-49	83	13	4
50-64	81	14	6
65+	72	21	7
Generation X	79	14	6
Boomer generation	83	12	5
Silent generation	77	19	5
G.I. generation	71	20	9
High school or less	80	14	6
Some college	77	16	8
College graduate	80	18	2
Post graduate	79	18	3
Northeast	82	14	4
North Central	78	14	8
South	80	15	5
West	78	16	6

**LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT  
FOR DISTRICT RESIDENTS**

---

Residents of Washington, D.C. should have the right to elect their own local officials to run their city government, like other U.S. cities.

	<b>Agree</b> (864) %	<b>Disagree</b> (96) %	<b>Don't know</b> (40) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
Men	87	10	3
Women	86	9	5
18-24	84	12	5
25-34	88	9	3
35-49	87	11	3
50-64	90	7	3
65+	83	9	8
Generation X	87	10	4
Boomer generation	86	11	3
Silent generation	92	5	3
G.I. generation	79	11	10
High school or less	86	10	4
Some college	88	9	3
College graduate	87	9	4
Post graduate	87	10	3
Northeast	88	9	2
North Central	97	7	5
South	84	13	4
West	88	8	4

**FEDERAL TAKEOVER AS SOLUTION  
FOR DISTRICT GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT**

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If the locally-elected city government of Washington, D.C. is poorly managed, the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge because it is the nation's capital.

	<b>Agree</b> (434) %	<b>Disagree</b> (507) %	<b>Don't know</b> (59) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>
Men	41	56	3
Women	46	46	8
18-24	57	39	4
25-34	47	50	3
35-49	38	56	6
50-64	36	58	5
65+	47	41	12
Generation X	51	46	3
Boomer generation	37	57	6
Silent generation	43	52	5
G.I. generation	45	38	18
High school or less	48	46	6
Some college	40	54	6
College graduate	37	59	4
Post graduate	37	56	7
Northeast	46	51	3
North Central	39	53	7
South	49	45	6
West	37	57	6

**FEDERAL OR STATE TAKEOVER AS SOLUTION  
FOR MISMANAGEMENT OF  
RESPONDENT'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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If YOUR local town or city government is poorly managed, your state or the federal government should take over and put different leaders in charge.

	Agree (367) %	Disagree (600) %	Don't know (33) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3</b>
Men	32	65	3
Women	41	55	4
18-24	56	40	3
25-34	43	55	2
35-49	34	65	1
50-64	28	69	3
65+	30	63	8
Generation X	48	49	2
Boomer generation	32	66	2
Silent generation	32	65	4
G.I. generation	29	62	9
High school or less	46	51	3
Some college	32	66	3
College graduate	22	76	3
Post graduate	18	77	5
Northeast	41	57	2
North Central	37	59	4
South	38	60	3
West	31	64	5

## PRINCIPLES OF OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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Replacing elected officials with unelected ones in the city of Washington, D.C. goes against the principles of our American democracy.

	<b>Agree</b> (709) %	<b>Disagree</b> (212) %	<b>Don't know</b> (80) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>
Men	73	22	6
Women	69	21	10
18-24	63	27	10
25-34	75	20	5
35-49	75	20	5
50-64	72	22	7
65+	60	22	18
Generation X	70	23	7
Boomer generation	74	19	6
Silent generation	74	21	6
G.I. generation	51	26	23
High school or less	65	25	10
Some college	77	18	4
College graduate	83	12	5
Post graduate	69	23	9
Northeast	74	23	3
North Central	72	18	10
South	69	22	9
West	69	22	9

**LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT  
AS AN EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY**

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It is important that the federal government allow Washington, D.C. residents to elect their own local leaders, as an example of democracy for the world.

	<b>Agree</b> (776) %	<b>Disagree</b> (151) %	<b>Don't know</b> (73) %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
Men	77	16	6
Women	78	14	8
18-24	78	16	5
25-34	79	16	5
35-49	81	13	6
50-64	81	13	6
65+	67	18	15
Generation X	79	16	5
Boomer generation	81	13	6
Silent generation	74	16	10
G.I. generation	68	18	14
High school or less	74	17	9
Some college	82	12	6
College graduate	86	12	3
Post graduate	78	19	3
Northeast	82	16	3
North Central	75	17	9
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# Historical Public Opinion Data

## HISTORICAL PUBLIC OPINION DATA

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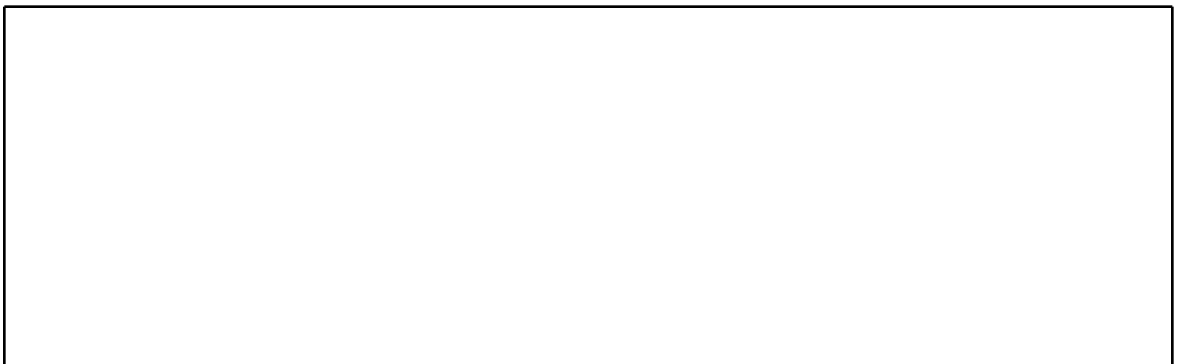
**1949**

**Home Rule:**

“People who live in Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia) do not now elect their city officials. Do you think they should or should not hold elections and vote for their local government officials?” (Source: *The Gallup Organization—Gallup Poll, July 3-8, 1949, 1,500 in-person interviews with U.S. adults*)



“At present, people who live in Washington, D.C. cannot vote for their city officials since they are appointed by the President of the United States. Do you think the people of Washington should elect their city officials – or should they continue to be appointed by the President?” (Source: *The Gallup Organization—Gallup Poll, July 2-7, 1949, 1,500 in-person interviews with U.S. adults*)



**1965**

**Home Rule:**

“As you know, the city of Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia) can vote in Presidential elections, but does not elect its own city Government. Congress is soon going to vote on whether or not to give the city of Washington home rule. Would you favor or oppose home rule for Washington, D.C.? (Source: *Louis Harris and Associates, September 1965, 1,250 in-person interviews with U.S. adults*)



“Why do you feel that way about home rule for the city of Washington?”

**Those who said they favor (66%)**

Every city should determine their own destiny (50%)  
Every community has the right to self-government (36%)  
They can do a better job than Congress (14%)

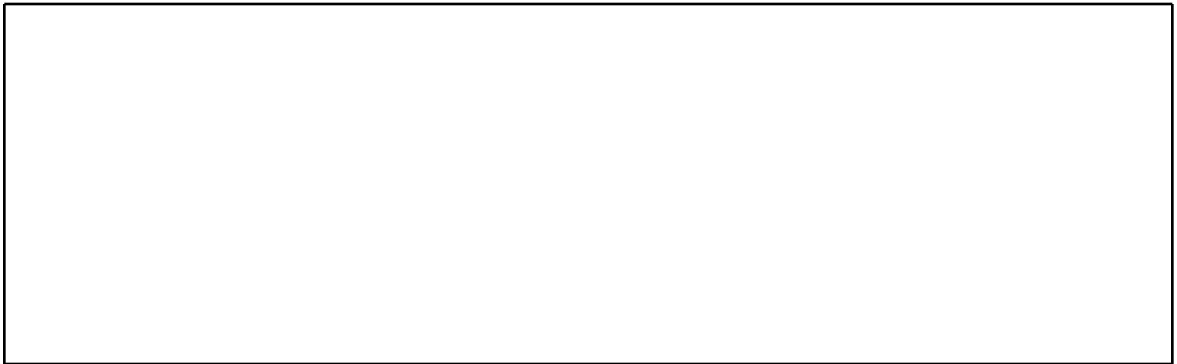
**Those who said they oppose (10%)**

Too many Negroes, would take over (70%)  
Seat of federal government should be run by federal government (20%)  
Population is transient (10%)

## 1989

### Home Rule:

“As you may know, the federal government ran Washington, D.C. until 1974. Since then, city residents have elected a mayor and council to run the city. Do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea if the federal government ran Washington, D.C. like it did before?” (Source: *The Washington Post*, March 17-21, 1989, 1,010 telephone interviews with U.S. adults)



## 1990

### Mayor Marion Barry

“Do you happen to know who Marion Barry is? (IF YES): Who is he?” (Source: *Times Mirror News Interest Index*, February 1-4, 1990, 1,245 telephone interviews with U.S. adults)



# **THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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Results show that citizens across the fifty states believe that the more than half million American citizens living in the federal district should have full voting rights, like other U.S. citizens.

This study reveals a stronger level of support for home rule than previously measured – 86 percent agreed that District residents should have the right to elect their own local officials.

Although the questions asked over the years have been worded differently, Americans have been *consistent* in their support for home rule.

YEAR	SOURCE	FINDING
1949	<i>Gallup</i>	65% say residents should elect their city officials. 20% say President should appoint.
1965	<i>Harris</i>	66% favor giving D.C. home rule. 10% oppose.
1989	<i>Washington Post</i>	48% say it would be a <u>bad</u> idea if the federal government ran D.C. like before home rule. 33% said good idea.
1997	<i>Richards</i>	86% agree that residents of D.C. should have the right to elect their own local officials. 10% disagree.

A large majority of Americans (79 percent) also said District residents should have voting representation in the U.S. Congress, like other U.S. citizens. District residents are currently the only people of all the world's democratic nations who are excluded from representation in their own nation's legislature.

District residents have always taken great pride in hosting the federal government and have even tolerated nearly 200 years of political disenfranchisement in exchange for that honor. Most residents believe they should have the same voting rights as other U.S. citizens—both the right to elect their own local officials and the right to elect voting representatives to the U.S. Congress.

District residents had the same voting rights as other citizens after the American Revolution, but lost their rights when their area was chosen to be the seat of the federal government. Under the Constitution of 1787, Congress was given exclusive legislative authority over the capital.

George Washington negotiated with local landowners—all land would be held in trust by the federal government, land and streets needed for L'Enfant's plan would be set aside for the federal government without charge, the remaining land would be divided into lots, half of which would be returned to the landowners, the other half of which the federal government would buy for \$36,099 (\$67 per acre). Washington died in 1799, just before the federal government moved to his newly created city.

When the federal government moved from Philadelphia to Washington, citizens protested because they lost their rights as American citizens. Augustus Woodward, writing under the pen name of “Epaminondas,” pointed out that the intent of the Constitution had not been to strip local residents of all participation in their government. James Madison had written in *The Federalist Papers* that resident's status would be protected “*as they will have had their voice in the election of the government which is to exercise authority over them; [and] as a municipal legislature for local purposes, derived from their own suffrages, will of course be allowed them.*”

“Epaminondas” suggested creating a “Territory of Columbia” with an elected legislature and adopting a Constitutional amendment to grant voting rights in the

national legislature to District residents. He told Congress “we are *legislating for posterity as well as for ourselves; ...the interests of millions unborn is confided to our hands.*”

Nothing came of Woodward’s efforts. District residents have been fully taxed without representation since December 1800.

Citizens living just miles away in the District’s suburbs, located in the states of Virginia and Maryland, have full voting rights as a part of those states. Some have argued that citizens who live in the nation’s capital “voluntarily” give up their voting rights and could move to one of the fifty states.

For the first year after creating the ten mile federal District, the cities of George Town and Alexandria continued to be governed by their locally elected leaders. Washington City was governed by the three presidentially-appointed commissioners that had been put into place in 1790 to oversee the construction of the new city. In 1801, Congress divided the District into two counties, Washington and Alexandria County. In 1802, Congress abolished the Board of Commissioners, and set up a local government in Washington City, partially appointed and partially elected.

Between 1802 and 1871, District residents (“residents” were defined as white males with some other qualifications) had limited home rule. The three cities within the District were often rivals and not cooperative, and both Georgetown and Alexandria petitioned Congress to retrocede to their respective states. Congress granted Alexandria their wish to retrocede to Virginia in 1846, even though residents of Alexandria County were opposed. Republicans came to regret this decision as the Civil War broke out in 1861.

After the Civil War, more than 30,000 freed slaves moved to the District. For a brief period, the Radical Republicans saw black voters as an important constituency to develop.

They wanted Washington to be a leader in suffrage and desegregation. However, Alexander “Boss” Shepherd and his allies, called the “Improver Republicans” by Professor Alan Lessoff because of their focus on economic progress, distanced themselves from those most interested in social progress in order to save their special programs.

In 1871, in anticipation of the District’s centennial, the three remaining municipal governments of the District—Georgetown, Washington City, and Washington County--were consolidated into one territorial government. The government had a presidentially-appointed Governor, 11-member council, and Board of Public Works. It also had an elected 22-member House of Delegates and a nonvoting delegate to the House of Representatives.

The territorial government was abolished three years later (1874) after Alexander “Boss” Shepherd, an appointee of President Grant, spent triple the amount he projected to spend on the 1871 Comprehensive Plan (\$18,872,566 instead of \$6,578,397) to improve the local infrastructure, which had become dilapidated during the Civil War.

Many local elites and many in Congress blamed the problem on the failure of democracy and black suffrage. George W. Riggs, a prominent local resident, commented that “*the majority of the voters here are incapable of self-government.*” In addition, many national leaders were embarrassed by Washington, as both foreign diplomats and fellow Americans didn’t hesitate to mention the ugly flaws, such as the awful infrastructure—the latter of which hurt the dignity of local residents the most. Local planners looked with envy upon the municipal projects of Baron Haussmann in Paris in the Second Empire under the rule of Napoleon III. (Ironically, Haussemann, like Shepherd, was also accused of mismanagement.)

Congress temporarily set up a 3-member commission system, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The commission system was made permanent three years later in The Organic Act of 1878. Local white elites and businesses had linked with Congress and left no formal mechanism for local input, effectively cutting out newly enfranchised black men and putting “experts” in power, a popular Progressive philosophy of city management.

By 1934, a Congressional study of the organizational structure of the federally-run District government required nine volumes. Between this time and 1941, Congress undertook thirty investigations on the problems of the newly urbanizing municipal government. A consensus emerged in support of reorganization. The movement for home rule grew as city services became more inefficient and the federal payment (provided in lieu of property taxes, etc.) declined.

Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas remarked to the Columbia Historical Society in 1938 that *“it is apparent that Congress intended to change the political status of the District in some degree from the beginning...”* He reminded residents that *“In waging this commendable war against a form of autocracy peculiarly repugnant to patriotic Americans you will find that our greatest enemy is indifference. Therefore, I charge you, never cease to agitate your cause; spread the fire of your zeal throughout the city and kindle the dormant sentiment of the Nation. If anything ever was worth fighting for it is national representation for the District of Columbia. And I am confident that finally your campaign will be victorious, as it well deserves to be.*

*In my State, if its 2,000,000 inhabitants were told that they could have no voice in the Government which they are taxed to support, I know what would quickly happen. An army would be organized, and it would march across the plains to the Capital of the country and enforce its rights. Of course, I do not recommend for you an appeal to arms. But you must all be aggressive to secure for yourselves that which is rightfully yours.”*

After World War II, President Harry Truman supported home rule for the District. He said *“I strongly believe that the citizens of the District of Columbia are entitled to self-government. ...Local self government is both the right and the responsibility of free men. The denial of self-government does not befit the National Capital of the world’s largest and most powerful democracy. Not only is the lack of self-government an injustice to the people of the District of Columbia, but it imposes a needless burden on Congress and it tends to controvert the principles for which this country stands before the world...”*

In 1949, Gallup conducted a survey of 1,500 U.S. adults and found that a majority of Americans agreed with President Truman’s sentiments. Sixty-five percent said *“the people of Washington should elect their city officials,”* while 20 percent said they should *“continue to be appointed by the President.”*

In 1960, partly out of fear of Cold War propaganda, Congress passed the Twenty-third Amendment granting District residents the right to vote for President. Because of federal government support, the Amendment sailed through state legislatures and was ratified by 39 states in March 1961. Border and southern states (with the exception of Tennessee) refused to ratify the Amendment.

Conditions in the District continued to deteriorate. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy noted that *“We’ve got the finest public buildings in the world here in Washington; but our school buildings are shameful. We have the world’s greatest books in our archives; but the books in our schools are fourth-rate. It’s easy to get action here when there’s an explosion in Saigon or Caracas, but you can have an explosive situation a few hundred yards from the Capitol and key officials look the other way.”*

In 1963, Bill Davidson, in describing Washington’s unelected city government, wrote that it had *“practically no government at all. It is like a monster with 50 heads, snapping at one another instead of serving the great body to which they are attached.”*



In 1965, like Gallup eleven years earlier, Louis Harris found a majority (66 percent) of the U.S. public in favor of Congress granting the city of Washington home rule. Harris found that those who favored home rule did so mainly because “*every city should determine their own destiny*” (50 percent), and “*every community has the right to self-government*” (36 percent). Those who were opposed to home rule (only 10 percent) said “*there are too many Negroes, they would take over*” (70 percent).

President Lyndon Johnson, like Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, supported home rule for the District. President Johnson stated that “*for much too long this Nation has tolerated in the District of Columbia conditions that our ancestors fought a revolution to eliminate.*”

In 1967, he submitted “Reorganization Plan No. 3” to Congress and won approval to abolish the 3-member commission and replace it with a single commissioner and a nine-member council, all appointed by the President. This has come to be viewed as a preparatory step toward self-government.

The local Board of Trade worked actively against home rule and urged newspapers across the nation to oppose it, saying “*The fact is that a great many Washingtonians -- including the overwhelming majority of local civic, professional, and business leaders -- are opposed to pending home rule legislation.*”

A group of local civic leaders issued a counter statement saying “*It is now time to say that the most potent opposition to effective home rule is not so much ‘up on the Hill’ as it is in a relatively small group of men related to the Board of Trade and purporting to speak for the entire business community, who do not want to relinquish the inordinate power they have long exercised over the affairs of the city.*” Marion Barry, a young civil rights leader, organized the controversial “Free DC” movement.

President Nixon supported voting rights for District residents. He said “*The District’s citizens should not be expected to pay taxes for a government which they have no part in choosing – or to bear the full burdens of citizenship without the full rights of citizens.*”

In 1969, when Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned, President Nixon asked Gerald Ford, the leading opponent of home rule in the Senate, to be Vice President. Opposition in the Senate diminished. In 1972, southern segregationist Rep. John L. McMillan (D-SC) was defeated in his state, thereby removing him from the House District Committee where he and seven other southern members had successfully blocked a full House vote needed to grant home rule. (During McMillan’s chairmanship--1945-1972--he ruled the city with an iron fist. To this day he is a local icon of southern oppression.)

Marion Barry, who had moved to Washington, D.C. to open the office of the Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee (which he founded), emerged as a leader for District home rule.

In 1970, District residents were granted the right to elect a *non-voting* delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1973, the home rule bill granting the District the right to limited local self-government was passed by the Senate, the House, and signed into law by President Nixon. In 1974, District residents voted in support of the bill.

The Home Rule Charter provided for an elected mayor and a thirteen-member Council. The Council was restricted from taxing federal property, federal tax exemptions, or the income of non-District residents (suburban commuters from Maryland and Virginia working in D.C., over sixty percent of the tax base), changing the height limitation of buildings, altering the court system, or changing the criminal code until 1977. Congress could review acts of the Council and overturn them if both houses voted within 30 days. Criminal code changes could be vetoed by a single House after 1977. The city’s

entire budget – both the federal payment for tax exempt status and municipal services (then at a high-point of 24 percent of the District’s budget) and local tax revenues (76 percent) – had to be approved as part of the federal budgeting process.

In 1978, Congress voted to give the District seven years to achieve ratification by 38 states of a Constitutional Amendment giving District residents the same voting representation in Congress as other U.S. citizens. Time ran out on the Amendment during the Reagan presidency, on August 22, 1985. Many residents came to see the statehood movement (New Columbia), initiated by Julius Hobson and Sam Smith in 1970, as the most expedient way to gain permanent rights equal to other U.S. citizens.

Even in 1989, at the height of one of the District’s most disgraceful moments when the F.B.I. lured Mayor Barry into a sting operation using a past girlfriend as bait, filmed him using drugs, and released the videotape to the world press, a *Washington Post* poll found that a plurality of the U.S. public thought it was a bad idea (48 percent) to give local rule back to the federal government. Only 33 percent of Americans thought it was a good idea. [In 1990, Time Mirror News Interest Index, in an open-ended question, asked Americans if they knew who Marion Barry was. A surprisingly high 40 percent were able to identify him as Mayor of Washington, D.C. without any prompting.]

Over the years, the Congress, with clear oversight authority, avoided pressing city officials for greater levels of accountability.

In 1990, Mayor Barry lost the election to Sharon Pratt Kelly, who promised to “clean the house using shovels.” That same year, The Commission on Budget and Financial Priorities of the District of Columbia, set up by Mayor Barry and led by Alice M. Rivlin, senior fellow of The Brookings Institution, reported (in *Financing the Nation’s Capital*) that the District would go into debt if immediate steps were not taken.

The Rivlin Report warned that the District had two choices -- either develop a plan to bring the budget into balance or face “*drastic and arbitrary cuts in public services, massive layoffs of employees, and emergency arrangements for financial bailout.*” The Rivlin Report pointed out that the structural arrangement between the federal government and the District was a key factor contributing to the economic problems.

In 1993, the statehood bill, the New Columbia Admission Act, was brought to a vote in House of Representatives. The bill failed by 63 votes (153 to 277). D.C. gained a symbolic step toward representation when their non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives was granted the right to vote in the House Committee of the Whole, (unless the vote was decisive).

In 1994, as conservative Republicans stormed the House and set out to implement their *Contract with America*, Marion Barry was reelected as the District’s mayor. On their first day in control, Republicans abolished the Delegate’s recently gained symbolic voting right.

D.C.’s City Council and the mayor created The Business Regulatory Reform Commission Act of 1994, which became law in March 1995, mandating the commission to identify statutes and regulations in the District that were obsolete, inconsistent or duplicative. Under the leadership of Councilmember Harold Brazil, the D.C. Council approved a reform bill on January 6, 1998.

The recession in the 1990s hit the District hard – the city lost 14,000 jobs between 1995-96 alone, with an unemployment rate double the surrounding jurisdictions. About ten percent of the District’s tax base moved to the suburbs between 1990-1996.

Increasingly, attention turned to the District's problems, inefficiency, corruption, and the mayor. Several District agencies were in receivership or under court orders, the District could not balance its budget, did not have the cash to pay its bills, and was shut out of the capital markets (because of loss of federal backing). In 1995, the federal government installed a financial "control board" to oversee the city. Federal officials blamed local officials, local officials blamed each other, and conservative commentators said residents didn't deserve local self-government. The city seemed to split along racial lines. Everyone apparently forgot their role in the symbiotic relationship.

By 1996, Barry announced a transformation plan to reduce the size of the government and increase its efficiency. Within one year, the mayor cut over twenty-five percent of government employees. Some agencies were cut fifty percent, exacerbating the crisis over poor quality of services.

In April 1997, a Task Force on District of Columbia Governance, sponsored by the Federal City Council (composed of and financed by 150 business, professional, education, and civic leaders) and DC Agenda, (a local group working to build consensus among local groups on policy issues), released a consensus report of at least 117 members with diverse interests with recommendations for improving the local government.

*The report stated that "There is universal agreement that the District of Columbia government is not functioning properly and that remedial action is needed. ...After months of careful study, the Task Force is convinced that the root cause of the District's difficulties is structural. The District government is asked to do too much, and has been given too little in the way of resources to do it. In particular, the District has responsibility for many state-like functions but is without a state to fall back on for assistance (as recently recognized and explained by the Control Board in a published report). The District also has had burdensome obligations transferred to it by the federal government, without the resources necessary to discharge those obligations.*

*"At the same time, the large portion of the District utilized by the national government or entities that relate to it (like foreign missions) is beyond the reach of the District's property taxes, reducing that source of revenue by well over \$300 million per year. In addition, by Act of Congress, the District is prohibited from taxing income earned in the District by non-residents, a prohibition not imposed on any other jurisdiction by the Congress, and one that costs the District some \$1 billion annually in potential lost revenue.*

*"The District's boundaries are fixed and limited, and they do not encompass many of the areas surrounding the center city that tend to be more prosperous. The net result is that the burdens of supporting the federal government fall disproportionately on the residents of the District and the businesses located here. This heavy burden in turn is an inducement for residents to move to the suburbs, and for businesses either to locate elsewhere or to move to sites outside the District.*

*"While the structural imbalances are the primary cause of the District's problems, these problems have been exacerbated by governmental operations that have been inefficient or worse and that are not performed well even considering the constraints imposed on the District."*

The Task Force offered a comprehensive set of recommendations, including voting representation for District residents in both houses of the U.S. Congress.

On July 29th, 1997, at 11:45 pm, the federal government passed the "National Capital Revitalization and Self Government Improvement Act," stripping authority from locally-elected representatives and transferring control of nine of twelve agencies to a presidentially-appointed "control board."

Washington Post columnist Mary McGrory noted (Aug. 21, 1997) that "Democracy has just been snuffed out here, but you'd never have know it from the great calm that has greeted the news in democracy's world headquarters. It's true that several hundred demonstrators picketed the home of columnist George Will, who wrote that the District did not deserve democracy. But

*good Cleveland park liberals, congressmen and senators who are passionate about participatory politics in Russia, Rwanda and the Sahara did not turn a hair as home rule was extinguished. You talk about 'taxation without representation,' which the Founding Fathers found intolerable, and they shrug."*

The District's nonvoting delegate to Congress, Eleanor Holmes Norton, praised the financial package part of the bill, but was upset because she believed Senator Faircloth had unnecessarily stripped the authority of all locally-elected officials. Representative Norton wrote (*The Washington Post*, Aug. 27, 1998) that "Some are said to cheer the extinguishing of their rights. I do not believe that. I believe that the cheers reflect exasperation with Mayor Barry and other city officials about the condition of the city. People don't cheer about losing their rights. ...As a fourth-generation Washingtonian and a committed democrat, I find the loss of home rule deeply humiliating. ...My family was here when the District lost home rule under Boss Shepherd. For me, the loss is personal. ...Let's waste no more time. I hope residents on the 'management side' and residents on the 'home rule side' will help form an 'action now side.' Action is the only way to fix the city. Action is the only realistic way to retrieve home rule. So we're all on the same side."

American University law professor Jamin Raskin wrote that "...City services and the corresponding quality of life in Washington have undoubtedly taken a turn for the worse over the last decade. ...But democracy includes the right of the people and their leaders to make mistakes. From this standpoint, the transfer of power from the mayor to the Control Board is nothing less than an act of despotism by a Republican Congress that otherwise swears by states' rights and local self-government." Raskin pointed out that "Maryland did not lose its sovereignty when Gov. Marvin Mandel went to jail on mail fraud charges; Arkansas was not placed in receivership when its Gov. Jim Guy Tucker was convicted of fraud. The right to be wrong is an important aspect of sovereignty. ...Congress's tightening of the reins only underscores the urgency of getting District residents voting representation on Capitol Hill, a constitutional imperative independent of calls for statehood or retrocession to Maryland."

*Washington Post* columnist Steve Twomey evoked District resident's sense of cynicism and feeling of dismay. He wrote (July 3, 1997) *"If I recall correctly, North Carolina was one of those misguided states that left us briefly to protest overbearing federal power, so having North Carolina's very own Lauch Faircloth deeply enmeshed in the federal evisceration of home rule in Washington simply shows how well some Southerners have been reconstructed since the unpleasantness of 1861-65. Yesterday, Faircloth, the Republican who heads the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the District, and other GOPers came to closure with the White House on reforming the city, and their plan amounts to putting the District's elected leaders into the frozen foods section of democracy while non-elected Mussolinis make the trains run on time. The result will be a hugely better city, no doubt. A good end is coming.*

*"...The temptation to cheer is great, and I blame no one who does. But there's no getting around the ugly means to a noble conclusion: the further nixing of ballot results in the name of a new and improved Washington. We send troops abroad to topple tin-pots and give The People the steering wheel of their destiny, but in our own capital, The People ride in the back, having chosen none of those on the Hill who are doing the driving. For nearly 200 years Washington has been the hole in our democracy, a pea under the July 4 mattress. ...Well, nobody said democracy's perfect. Sometimes The People choose dumb. Sometimes The People sit there while mayors and councils swim in excuses. As Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton put it yesterday, 'If you want home rule, rule.' Nobody did. And now Congress has stepped in and set the Way Back Machine for pre-home rule days because, hey, it can. ...It all goes to show that, now more than ever, the paradox at the heart of America can't go on. The world's leading democracy can't be suspending the rules every so often in its own capital."*

Senator Lauch Faircloth (R-NC), chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee on the District, explained in *The Washington Post* (Sept. 3, 1997) that he had led the charge to take over local self-government in the District because the mayor's 16-year record was poor, the District bureaucracy was bloated, failed to deliver essential services, had weak management, and had wasted federal money. He pointed out that the "election

*that should have concerned city leaders most is the silent one in which 300,000 citizens have voted with their feet and left in the past 25 years.” He reassured the city that “The control board will disappear after four years of consecutive balanced budgets.”*

Colbert I. King recalled his childhood in D.C. (*Washington Post*, Aug. 16, 1997), a time when the unelected commissioners proclaimed an official song for the city, which his all-black racially separated peers sang in a hand-me-down school amidst a disenfranchised city—“WASH-ING-TON, the fair-est ci-ty in the greatest land of all. Named for one, our coun-try’s fa-ther who first an-swered free-dom’s call/God bless our White House, our Ca-pitol, too/ And keep- ev-er fly-ing the Red, White and Blue.”

King pointed out that “*District residents shouldn’t have to prove their worthiness to have the same rights enjoyed by other Americans,*” then added that “*We’re here, in part, because we let down. ...We committed the cardinal sin of forgetting where we are; of deluding ourselves into thinking that those downtown and Capitol Hill smiles meant acceptance and that a golden age had arrived; of failing to remember the hard, bitter truth that in this world there’s never a time when we as a people are allowed the luxury of sitting back and relaxing and enjoying our meager gains. We failed to pass on what we were taught: that every generation has to press down and re-win the victory. That, as long as we draw breath on this earth, it’s always a struggle.*”

Many local residents have tuned the whole operatic episode out, perhaps hoping they’ll wake up in the city they love to find streets without potholes, personal safety, and good schools. In the most recent at-large city council election, ninety-three percent of residents did not even vote. Many who love their neighborhoods and who are loyal to the city feel there are few effective ways for locals to be involved in the rebuilding of their government.

Yet, the spirit of the people of the District, whose pride has been wounded, isn’t lost. Mark E.P. Roberts, in an article entitled “My D.C.” (*Washington City Paper*, Sept. 19,

1997), echoed the feelings of many residents when he wrote passionately about the city he loves. *"...They tell me I live in the worse place in America. ...D.C. is the capital of the trifling, who did not have the sense to move when the going was good. Worse yet, as an African-American, I am part of a dark, teeming mass of ignorance that not only flooded our nation's capital with mambo sauce and 'Chocolate City' chants, but also had the audacity to... re-elect the bogeyman. In short, I am a fool.*

*"Increasingly despondent and tired of reading disparaging accounts of my life, a month ago I began taking morning walks.... ...At every corner, early risers smile and whisper good morning. The streets and alleys I see are clean, the sidewalks clear, and the trash collected. Geraniums and bright red impatiens are everywhere. An older lady gently rocks on her porch, exchanging light pleasantries with her neighbor. ...*

*"In the days ahead, I test my growing appreciation of D.C.'s beauty in other neighborhoods, visiting one brother in Fort Lincoln, another in Capitol Hill, an uncle in Petworth, my mother in Shipley Terrace. It is all remarkably the same. ...One evening, listening to the local news, I cringe at yet another report lambasting my chosen home. Everything I hear and read, it seems, is meant to break my spirit. Continually, I am told what the District is not, but never what it is.*

*...When the appointed control board issues new proclamations from an impenetrable fortress, when the unelected school board of trustees preaches accountability from behind closed doors, when some politician from nowhere suddenly lands in town claiming to know more about me than I do, I do not mourn for Marion Barry. I do not mourn for Eleanor Holmes Norton... I mourn for me. I grieve for democracy. Faircloth once suggested that D.C. residents who did not welcome congressional interference should simply move away, as though the houses we inhabit hold no meaning, no memories, no worth.*

*...For most D.C. residents, ...I sense growing flashes of rage tempered by a resignation about their powerlessness. As for me... I believe in fighting back. I believe the concept of self-governance in*

*America must prevail—no matter what. I do not support the dangerous imposition of managerial standards as a prerequisite for democracy. As the names of patriotic Washingtonians etched in the Vietnam Memorial make abundantly clear, democracy is not something one earns; it is something one defends. ...As the battle for home rule intensifies, I can hear tomorrow's victory in my children's laughter. I hear it in their games and growing songs. I will take them with me on a morning walk. I want them to feel the pride I felt growing up in the District. I want them to know the pride I feel again. After all, for worse and for better, this is my home. This is my D.C."*

Residents, passionate though some are, seem to know that the more things change the more they stay the same. And at the dawn of the capital's bicentennial, nearly 200 years after the citizens of the District lost their right to be represented, they are no closer to achieving this goal.

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# **LOCAL GOVERNANCE TIMELINE**

## **198 YEARS OF EXPERIMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

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Throughout their history, citizens of the District of Columbia have never been granted the right to have voting representatives in their nation's legislature. Their local government has been changed frequently, at the will of Congress, and has often been unelected.

**MAIN** Diner, Steven J. *Democracy, Federalism, and the Governance of the Nation's Capital, 1790-1974*. Center for Applied

**SOURCE:** Research and Urban Policy, University of the District of Columbia.

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### **MULTIPLE GOVERNMENTS, UNELECTED AND ELECTED—2 YEARS**

- 1800 ~~Washington~~ incorporated rural areas of District governed by 3-member Board of Commissioners. Locally-elected governments of George Town and Alexandria City left intact. George Town under Maryland law, Alexandria City under Virginia law.
- 1801 Congress divides District into two counties—former Maryland area Washington County, former Virginia area Alexandria County. Court system and Presidentially-appointed marshal, district attorney, justices of the peace, and other officials.

### **COMBINED UNELECTED AND ELECTED GOVERNMENT—18 YEARS**

- 1802 Congress abolishes Board of Commissioners, incorporates Washington City, establishes limited self- government with Presidentially-appointed mayor and 12-member city council elected by free white male property owners with 1 year residence. Five members serve as upper house, 7 serve as lower house. Georgetown and Alexandria governments left intact. No self-government for unincorporated counties.
- 1804 Congress extends 1802 charter 15 years, provides direct elections of both houses of the Council, each with 9 members.
- 1812 Congress provides for election of the mayor by the two houses of the Council. Enlarges the Council with an 8-member Board of Aldermen (2 from each of 4 wards) elected for 2-year terms, and a 12-member Common Council (3 from each ward), elected for one-year terms.

### **ELECTED GOVERNMENT—51 YEARS**

- 1820 Congress extends 1812 charter, provides for election of mayor by popular vote (white male property owners).
- 1846 Congress votes to allow Alexandria City and Alexandria County to retrocede to Virginia. Residents of Alexandria City approve. Residents of Alexandria County, who disapproved, excluded from vote.
- 1848 Congress approves new charter allowing voters to elect Board of Assessors (1-member from each ward), the register, the collector, and surveyor. Abolishes property qualifications for voting, extends voting rights to all white male voters who pay \$1 yearly school tax.

**COMBINED UNELECTED AND ELECTED GOVERNMENT—3 YEARS**

- 1871 Congress establishes territorial government with Presidentially-appointed territorial governor, upper house, and Board of Public Works, and popularly elected lower house and non-voting delegate to House of Representatives.

## **UNELECTED GOVERNMENT—99 YEARS**

- 1874 Congress abolishes territorial government and gives President authority, with advice and consent of the Senate, to appoint 3-member commission and officer of the Army Corps of Engineers to temporarily govern.
- 1878 Congress passes Organic Act providing for 3 Presidentially-appointed commissioners (2 civilians and local residents for at least 3 years and 1 officer of the Army Corps of Engineers), payment of 50% of the District's annual budget with Congressional approval of annual budget and any contract over \$1,000 for public works. Federal court system [by 1919, reduces federal payment to 40%. In 1925, Congress abandons fixed percentage federal payment, gives commissioners authority to raise local taxes.]
- 1952 Reorganization Plan transfers to the three commissioners functions of over 50 boards.
- 1961 23rd Amendment grants District residents right to vote for President. Opposed by all border and southern states, except Tennessee.
- 1967 Congress approves reorganization plan submitted by President. Abolishes Board of Commissioners and replaces with Presidentially-appointed single commissioner as executive head of District government, deputy commissioner, and nine-member city council.
- 1968 Congress grants right to popular election of Board of Education.
- 1970 President Nixon signs bill recreating the office of the *non-voting* delegate to the House of Representatives. Congress passes District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act reorganizing court system. Separates federal from local courts, assigns all cases of original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Local courts gain similar powers to state courts.

## **ELECTED GOVERNMENT WITH CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT—24 YEARS**

- 1973 Congress passes and President signs District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization 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. City voters approved the partial home rule charter in 1974.
- 1995 Congress passes and President signs law creating Presidentially-appointed District of Columbia Financial Control Board and a mayor-appointed Chief Financial Officer.

## **COMBINED UNELECTED AND ELECTED GOVERNMENT--? YEARS**

- 1997 Congress passes and President signs National Capital Revitalization and Self

Government Act, stripping authority from all locally-elected representatives and transferring day-to-day control of 9 of 12 agencies to appointed Control Board. Bill provides \$200 million in debt relief, takes back unfunded \$5 billion pension liability transferred to District government in 1974, and takes over Medicaid, courts, and prisons (“state functions”). Locally-elected officials can regain authority after four consecutive balanced budgets.



