



**The Federal City Council Announces  
Creation of “Statehood Research DC”  
and  
Release of First Report**

**Washington, DC (March 19, 2021)** — The Federal City Council, a nonprofit civic organization, is launching a new nonprofit called [Statehood Research DC](#) (SRDC) in advance of Monday's Congressional hearing on statehood.

Statehood within the next decade is a realistic possibility. Policymakers should understand the historical context and have the tools they need to outline a plan for how the new state's government would function.

Statehood Research DC will answer these more practical questions about statehood by sponsoring research, briefing papers and other education materials.

SRDC commissioned its first research project to explore the history behind DC's lack of local legislative independence and lack of voting representation in Congress. The report, entitled “Democracy Deferred: Race, Politics, and D.C.'s Two-Century Struggle for Full Voting Rights,” is coauthored by George Derek Musgrove and Chris Myers Asch, two of the city's leading historians and authors of *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital*. You can find the report [HERE](#).

Their new report has some important findings for the current statehood debate:

- The Founders never reconciled the tension between the revolutionary imperative for “no taxation without representation” and the federal government's need for “exclusive legislation” regarding the seat of government. DC residents originally voted for U.S. senators and representatives, but that right was stripped away when Congress claimed “exclusive legislation” over the federal district with the Organic Act of 1801.
- After a brief flowering of interracial democracy during Reconstruction, DC residents, Black and White, lost all voting rights in 1874. For nearly a century, race — and the fear of Black political power — played a significant role in defeating all attempts to win home rule and congressional representation as segregationists successfully derailed efforts to return suffrage to District residents.
- Buoyed by the civil rights movement, a bipartisan, interracial coalition of activists, with support from federal leaders, won a series of victories that provided for a vote in presidential elections, local self-government, and a non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives in the 1960s and 1970s. DC activists gained bipartisan support for a constitutional amendment providing for voting representation in Congress in the mid-1970s, but it was defeated by New Right opposition at the state level. In the late 20th century, DC residents embraced statehood as their favored vehicle for winning representation in Congress.

Monday's hearing on DC statehood will highlight these central historical points—and especially the role of race in depriving DC residents of local legislative independence and voting representation in Congress.

SRDC will also be commissioning projects that explore the economic competitiveness implications of statehood. How will statehood impact decisions about where residents choose to live, businesses choose to locate and business perceptions about the District as a place to do business?

Another line of research will focus on the new state's relationship with the federal government. A host of legal questions would have to be settled between the federal government and the new state, including whether federally imposed regulations would still stand, how DC's criminal justice system would function, and whether there are other administrative obligations that the federal government should retain for practical reasons.

The Federal City Council is proud to incubate this effort. The Federal City Council is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization made up of leading Washington-area business and civic leaders committed to the improvement of the District of Columbia. Since our founding in 1954, we have acted at the confluence of federal and local Washington to promote the economic and social vitality of the nation's capital. The Federal City Council has a long history of supporting good governance. Preparing our community for statehood is essential for laying the groundwork for a well-run state.

**SRDC website:**

[statehoodresearchdc.org](http://statehoodresearchdc.org)

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