**How the District of Columbia Can Achieve Statehood:**

**Supporting the Democratic Process in the Cradle of Democracy**

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# Abstract

The question of whether the District of Columbia should be able to receive the status of statehood is a relevant question in American politics because hundreds of thousands of American citizens living there do not currently have voting representation in Congress; these citizens laws are all subject to be overridden by the United States Congress. For decades, the D.C. statehood movement has struggled to gain sufficient support to achieve its aim. The movement has failed to win an adequate amount of support from the majority of Congress and the American public. The issue of D.C. statehood remains far from the forefront of the current political agenda in the United States. This study analyzes the political framing techniques used by the prominent players in the statehood movement. It investigates whether the movement’s advocates have met requirements that framing theory advances as critical for a social movement to be successful. The study explores key parts of framing theory, including the core requirements of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational arguments, as well as a balance between pragmatic and emotional frames.  The study determines whether these framing elements exist in the public discourse of D.C. statehood advocates or whether the statehood movement needs to add additional framing elements to mobilize broad support and achieve its goal.

# Introduction

The struggle for District of Columbia (D.C.) statehood has been ongoing since America’s founding. As the nation’s capital and a federal district, the United States Constitution “grants Congress exclusive jurisdiction in all cases whatsoever” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, Clause 17) over D.C. This congressional jurisdiction over D.C. has resulted in a lack of autonomy on local matters and denied equal representation in the United States Congress for D.C. citizens. However, this arrangement occurred because of a historical anomaly. When the nation’s capital was in Philadelphia following independence and the city was surrounded by former members of the Continental Army, the Pennsylvania government refused to provide assistance to protect Congress (Democracy or Distrust, 1998). Therefore, the founding fathers vowed to have the new capital city of Washington D.C under the control the federal government (Democracy or Distrust, 1998), as opposed to being at the mercy of any state government. Centuries have passed and the citizens of Washington D.C are still living with the consequences of this decision. Much has changed since the city’s founding and the creators of this arrangement likely never imagined that the nation’s capital city would have a larger population than some states, nor is it likely that they could have foreseen the number of American citizens refused representation in Congress due to D.C.’s federal control rather than statehood.

D.C. statehood is important because the issue represents a shortcoming of American democracy. Originally, our nation fought for independence in large part as opposition to being taxed by the British without representation in legislature. Yet, for decades, residents of D.C. have been living in the United States and paying federal taxes without being able to have representation in the United States Congress. “Taxation without representation” is much more than a catchy slogan for D.C. residents or their license plates. The phrase represents a larger civil rights struggle facing citizens in the nation’s capital, since they have been stripped of their rights. Unfortunately, the political, largely partisan, obstacles facing D.C. statehood make the potential for statehood unrealistic. As long as Congress continues to view the people of D.C. and their governing council as nothing more than Democratic votes, the people of D.C. will continue to lose out on their democratic rights to representation in Congress. It would be inconvenient for Congress to give D.C. wiggle room in their relationship with them. This is because Congress often uses the power given to them from the Home Rule Act of 1973 to make changes to the laws of D.C., as they see fit. Congress treats D.C. in a paternalistic manner, where the body has final say on all issues facing the nation’s capital. In order to achieve statehood, the D.C government needs to make an effort to win public support and engagement from the general public to force Congress into taking action on the issue.

## History of the D.C. Statehood Movement

Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove (2017) provide one of the best and most extensive histories of the complicated racial issues and politics facing the nation’s capital city of Washington D.C from the United States’ founding in the 1700’s to 2010. Asch and Musgrove (2017) use the story of the city’s founding to show some of the reasoning behind injustices that Washingtonians face today. The City of Washington, D.C. was founded following the Compromise of 1790, where the northerner, Alexander Hamilton, negotiated with the southerners, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, to give the South the nation’s capital in exchange for having the South agree to Hamilton’s debt relief plan. Although this compromise was important to the founding of the United States, it had real consequences for the state of democracy in the new nation’s capital. As the city of Washington was founded to serve the purpose of the nation’s capital, the city did not obtain the right to elect full voting representatives or have the right to full home rule.

Asch and Musgrove (2017) provide a detailed analysis of how the demographic shift to becoming a majority African-American city in the early 1960’s has contributed to the obstacles of the statehood movement. The authors chronicle how racial concerns, originating towards the end of the 1960’s, affected the statehood debate. At that time, prominent black nationalist leaders in the city of Washington, including Reverend Douglass Moore and, journalist, Chuck Stone, promised to use “whatever force necessary to achieve statehood” (Asch and Musgrove, 2017, p. 393) for the District of Columbia. Although these men never carried out their threat, the idea of D.C. statehood was then picked up by the white progressive journalist, Sam Smith, who pushed for an uncompromised version of statehood for the District. Moore and Stone came to adopt Smith’s article, “The Case for D.C. Statehood,” as a larger part of their push to create a rival third party, the Statehood Party, which would challenge the Democratic Party in D.C. (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). According to the archivist of the Washington Division of the D.C. Public Library, Faye Hastings (2000), in 1966, Marion Barry, the then Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), announced the creation of “Free D.C.”, which he described as “a coalition of civil rights groups working for home rule through a boycott of businesses owned by individuals opposed to home rule” (Hastings, 2000, p. 55). The SNCC boycott showed the strong ties that existed between the civil rights movement and the movement for D.C. rights, and was aligned as a prominent part to the national civil rights movement.

As the statehood movement gained support in the city, Democrat Walter Fauntroy was elected in 1971, beating the Statehood Party’s Julius Dobson, to become Washington’s first non-voting delegate in the United States House of Representatives. Although Dobson lost the campaign, he was able to position the D.C. Statehood movement into a more prominent place in D.C. politics (Hastings, 2000). Asch and Musgrove (2017)use the campaign of the bitter rivals in Fauntroy and Dobson to chronicle the city’s early debates about whether to take a pragmatic or radical path for pushing the statehood issue. Rather than pushing for statehood, Fauntroy focused on the pragmatic path of obtaining home-rule, or the creation of a D.C. Council, which would allow locally-elected officials to serve the interests of D.C.’s citizens. Fauntroy was able to operate within national political confines to get home rule. He helped gather volunteers from D.C. to travel to South Carolina to defeat the segregationist, John McMillan, who had previously blocked legislation advancing the civil rights prospects of Washingtonians (Hastings, 2000). By removing McMillan, the path cleared for the House of Representatives to pass legislation to grant D.C. home rule and President Nixon signed into law the D.C Home Rule Act in December, 1973 (Hastings, 2000).

 Although home rule allowed for the creation of a D.C council and a mayor with true governing powers, Congress retained the right to veto all of the laws passed by the new body. Therefore, advocates for statehood, like Sam Smith, felt that home-rule was an overly compromised step that did not actually help the district break away from federal rule. For example, the Chair of the House District Committee, Charles Diggs, described the relationship between Congress and D.C. as a “joined partnership,” but with Congress as the superior partner (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). Therefore, statehood activists continued to fight for a more radical solution to address the injustices facing Washingtonians.

R. Kent Weaver and Charles Harris (1989) of the Brookings Institute further detail the shortcomings of the compromised home rule. Weaver and Harris assert that home-rule has resulted in Congress imposing its values on the people of Washington. Detailing the confrontational relationship between the city of Washington and Congress, Weaver and Harris (1989) conclude problems are inevitable when a conservative or right-wing Congress imposes its values on the more left-leaning, liberal D.C. When this occurs, Washington D.C. loses its ability to have any real form of self- government because the D.C Council is left powerless due to Congress’ veto power.

In 1980, a prominent Washingtonian, Ed Guinan, unexpectedly pushed a referendum that would lead to a four-step process for D.C. to achieve statehood: 1) voters in D.C. would need to pass a referendum on the issue of statehood, 2) a Convention on Statehood that would develop a constitution for D.C, 3) voters in D.C. would ratify the new Constitution, and 4) D.C. would formally ask Congress to become a state (Hastings, 2000). While Guinan’s referendum passed, it did not to do so overwhelmingly (Asch and Musgrove, 434). A good chunk of the opposition to the idea of statehood came from the League of Women voters, as well as white citizens who were not comfortable becoming a city run predominately by African-Americans without congressional oversight. The fact that the referendum was passed by a thinner margin than was expected diverted the bill’s momentum heading into the Statehood Convention. The convention resulted in the passing of the most progressive constitution in the history of the United States. Asch and Musgrove (2017) describe the convention process as essentially a doomed exercise with little chance of achieving success. Even prominent statehood activists like Sam Smith questioned the choice to have a constitution that would provoke further controversy. He felt that a more effective strategy would have been to copy the constitution of another state (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). The progressive constitution ratified at the convention was then ratified by D.C. voters by an even slimmer margin, 53 percent (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). Following the approval of the constitution, Mayor Barry informed Congress of D.C.s intention to become a state (Asch and Musgrove, 2017).

For a short time following Mayor Barry’s message to Congress about the intention of D.C. to seek statehood, no action was taken on the issue in Congress. Less than a handful of the 435 representatives supported statehood. This changed when the prominent civil rights leader and presidential candidate, Jesse Jackson, moved to the nation’s capital. Jackson was able to win election as D.C.’s Shadow Senator in 1990. Asch and Musgrove (2017) describe how Jackson used this position and high national stature to help convince prominent congressmen, like Senator Ted Kennedy and Senator Arlen Spector, to publicly support statehood for the district. Jesse Jackson a prominent civil rights leader and presidential candidate fully immersed himself in the struggle for statehood. Following his move to the city, Jackson (1990) discussed the limitations that came from the proposals of politicians, such as then President George H. W. Bush’s statements that D.C. should get “some representation” and not statehood. Jackson compared these proposals to being a “little bit pregnant, either you have representation or you do not” (Jackson, 1990, p. 307). Jackson felt that the system of home rule had not done anything to end congressional oversight of the D.C. Council and its laws. Furthermore, Jackson (1990) advocated that statehood was the only moral solution for the citizens of the District. Jackson’s moral case for statehood tied the D.C statehood continued to tie the issue with African-American’s struggle for civil rights. The passion behind his push for the expansion of rights for Washingtonians is felt in his writing. Jackson compares Congress’ control of the city’s affairs as a form of “tyranny” the American people would have to reconcile (Jackson, 1990, p. 308).

Even with Jackson’s inroads, the statehood movement continued to come up far short of the support needed to pass a bill granting statehood. In spite of this reality, in November, 1993, Eleanor Holmes Norton (the newly elected delegate representing D.C in the House of Representatives) pushed for a floor vote on D.C.’s statehood. The vote failed overwhelmingly with only 153 representatives voting for statehood and a massive bipartisan majority of 277 voting against the bill (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). The overwhelming failure of the 1993 vote ended any momentum the movement had. Repercussions included Jesse Jackson not running for reelection as a Shadow Senator, choosing instead to return to Chicago rather than to continue the statehood fight. Thus, although the movement had become more mainstream with the strong support of nationally-known, public figures such as Jackson, it was unable to gather the support needed for legislation granting statehood and advocacy faded.

Following, Holmes Norton’s push in the early 1990’s, the movement’s progress has been rather slow. By the 1990s, the statehood movement faced nearly universal opposition from Republicans and also struggled to win the support of a large number of Democrats. Musgrove (2017) asserts that the statehood movement is doomed and not taken seriously, as demonstrated by the struggles the movement had to convincingly pass referendums in the 1980’s and the House vote in the 1990’s. For a house vote to fail by an overwhelming margin of 277-153 required a large number of Democrats to side with Republicans in opposing statehood and maintaining congressional rule over the elected government of the District.

Moving into the twenty-first century, the fight for statehood continued to simmer but not gain momentum. Although there was some hope that the election of the nation’s first African-American President in 2008 might revive statehood chances, the Obama Administration did not align itself with the movement. In 2016, Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, D.C., prepared for a new push for statehood. Bowser hoped that with a presidential victory by Hillary Clinton, coupled with Democratic victories in the Senate and House, DC’s statehood movement could be propelled to prominence (Musgrove, 2017). However, Clinton was defeated and the Republicans retained control of both the House and Senate, forcing Bowser and statehood advocates to reconsider the statehood issue’s future.

Muriel Bowser, the current Mayor of Washington D.C., fully embraces the idea of pushing for statehood under her “Tennessee Plan.” In public statements, Bowser (2018) has highlighted the increasing support that D.C. statehood plans are receiving in the House of Representatives. The Tennessee plan describes moving forward with statehood through a multi-step process. First, a D.C. referendum on the issue of statehood, which would be followed immediately by a constitutional convention. Following the constitutional convention, the D.C Council would ratify what comes out of Congress (Bowser, 2018). Then, the leaders of the D.C. Council would approach Congress with their Congress plan. This plan is called The Tennessee Plan because this is the approach Tennessee used to become a state in 1796 (Bowser, 2018). Although this is the current strategy used by the prominent leaders of the Statehood Movement to obtain support for their cause, this strategy was clearly not the first choice of the movement. As stated before, the movement hoped that a Hillary Clinton victory in 2016 alongside other Democratic victories in the House and Senate would allow for statehood to be seriously pushed. However, these hopes did not come to reality. Therefore, the movement had to change its strategy into something new and something that would have very little chance of passing under a Republican President.

Thus, across decades, the statehood movement has tried to make itself a prominent concern among Americans, but for decades it has come up short in reaching the adequate amount of support needed to make a real and important push for statehood.

## Perspectives on Statehood Advocacy

Prominent political leaders of the past and present have outlined rationales for the need for statehood. The early 1970s forwarded a more radical position in support of statehood than is typically seen today. The more radical thinker Julius Hobson (compared to Fauntroy) believed that statehood was a natural right to the city of Washington that could no longer be denied to its people (Asch and Musgrove, 2017). Hobson along with black radical activists believed that statehood was the only path forward for the city. This vision for statehood contrasted with Fauntroy’s push for Self-Rule in the district. As Hobson and the more radical vision for the city, believed that statehood was the only solution for the city and the African Americans living in the city. Therefore, the push for statehood in the early days involved the struggle of African Americans trying to obtain their rights by any means necessary to grant individuals living in a majority African American city their rights that had been denied to them by a white-dominated Congress (Asch and Musgrove, 2017).

Around the same time as the rise of radical black statehood activists, feminist activists, like Jo Delaplaine and Helen Young, entered the statehood debate. Delaphanie and Young (1980) asserted that for decades the women of Washington D.C had been denied the right to self-determination in their own government. Framed from a feminist perspective, denial of D.C. statehood was viewed as keeping the women in D.C from having a say in their own affairs, with decisions controlled instead by paternalistic group of overwhelmingly male members of Congress.

In the early 1990’s, less radical perspectives were forwarded as reasons for D.C. statehood. For example, in making her doomed push for statehood, the newly elected Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, outlined the extraordinary ways in which our democracy is incomplete without the people of D.C. having the right to have full elected officials and the right to control their own laws (Norton & Biley, 1993). She framed these problems as part of a larger embarrassment for America’s capital city, rather than solely a progressive issue for Blacks or feminists (Norton & Biley, 1993).

Current political leaders, like Mary Cheh, D.C. Councilmember for Ward 3, documents both the moral and logical need to implement statehood. She asserts that the district’s economic strength makes statehood feasible (Cheh, 2014). Cheh outlines the moral case for D.C Statehood by talking about how D.C is the only capital city in the world where its residents are not entitled to full representation. Not only does Cheh focus on why statehood is the best option for D.C, she also focuses on why the other smaller and less radical alternatives to statehood are not suitable. Cheh (2014) refutes Professor Peter Raven-Hansen’s (1991) argument that D.C should be given the status of pseudo statehood only for the purpose of achieving representation. She believes that the District Clause, which allows for Congress to intervene in “all cases whatsoever” in the legislative affairs of D.C will always override any solution other than statehood. Although Cheh concludes that Statehood is an extremely challenging proposition because Republicans are highly unlikely to grant statehood to an overwhelmingly Democratic locality, she concludes that statehood is the only option for the district going forward. As she describes it, nothing else will ever address the clear injustices facing Washingtonians.

Other prominent voices, like Jamin Raskin (2014), a former law professor and current United States Congressman from Maryland, have proposed a so called “democracy amendment” that would consist of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing every American the right to vote in elections and participate in presidential and congressional elections. Pushing for Raskin’s democracy amendment would serve as an alternative to the statehood pathway. Although Raskin does support the principle of D.C. statehood, he finds the path of success for that movement to be non-existent (Raskin, 2014). The Democracy Amendment would ensure that every Washingtonian would receive the same fundamental rights to representation in Congress as a state without granting the city statehood.

Raskin’s statehood alternative has some similarities to the ideas proposed by law school student Lawrence Frankel (1991) at the University of Pennsylvania. Frankel shares Raskin’s belief that a full statehood movement is doomed to failure. However, Frankel proposes granting a compromised version of statehood that would allow for Washingtonians to have full voting rights and full voting representatives in Congress without statehood (Frankel, 1991). Voices in favor of a representative solution, such as Frankel, believe that the fight for statehood is doomed so a compromise must be made to grant D.C. citizens a victory in the form of democratic representation in Congress. This type of representation would give D.C. a form of representation that the city has never achieved prior and, therefore, a victory in their fight for representation in Congress.

Peter Raven-Hansen (1991), a professor at the George Washington University Law School, points out that there are real constitutional barriers to statehood. Hansen refers to a statement from the Department of Justice that concluded statehood is a constitutional issue and not a racial issue. The language of the District Clause (U.S. Const. amend. XXIII) provides critical barriers to D.C statehood (Hansen, 1991) because it grants Congress absolute control into all the affairs of the city. Opponents to statehood argue that this language creates a constitutional mandate for Congress to have the final say in the affairs of the District. Hansen argues that the 23rd Amendment to the Constitution (which provides Washington D.C the minimum amount of electoral votes in presidential elections) was ratified by all the other states with an understanding that D.C. was in a unique positon that differed from statehood. Therefore, these individuals believe that the 23rd Amendment needs to be repealed prior to D.C. statehood becoming constitutionally possible.

David Crockett (2003), a Professor at Trinity University, states Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution establishes the capital city as a federal city and it might take a constitutional amendment for D.C. to ever become a state. Both Hansen’s and Crocket’s framing of the Constitutional dilemmas to statehood cautions against focusing only on the political dilemma of statehood without simultaneously resolving the constitutional dilemma. Therefore, their work is designed to place an importance on what they presume to be the real and transparent roadblocks that might always be a barrier to the district achieving statehood if left unresolved.

Roger Pilon of the Cato institute lays out the ideological case to be made against statehood. Pilon states that “James Madison stated in Federalist Paper 43 the need to create a Federal District that was separate from the states” (Pilon, 2016). He also asserts that the Constitution lays out no distinction between the Seat of Government and the District within the city. Therefore, any statehood plan would be unconstitutional because it would infringe on the federal government’s right to control the entire city. Pilon’s (2016) critique of the statehood movement is that it is a waste of time and space that isn’t going anywhere politically, constitutionally or practically. He asserts that the Republican Party will never go near D.C Statehood simply because the district is overwhelmingly Democratic. Therefore, the Statehood movement is described as a doomed political movement that is not really going to lead anywhere.

On the other hand, Mary Cheh (2014) of the D.C. Council disagrees with the constitutional concerns laid out by Raven-Hansen (1991). Cheh concludes that Washington D.C. has met the three requirements needed for the city to become a state. According to Cheh, these preconditions include an allegiance to democracy, the support of the people, and the resources to sufficiently support becoming a state. Cheh asserts that because D.C.’s voters have always consistently approved statehood in democratic referendums and because the city of Washington has a surplus, the historical legal preconditions to statehood have been met.

Jamin Raskin (1990) also adds his voice to the constitutional concern, highlighting that there would be no constitutional problem with statehood if the federal government were to retain its control of federal buildings within the city. Specifically, if D.C were to redraw its boundaries to delineate a state called New Columbia and an enclave or protected federal buildings and land under the control of Congress, there would be no constitutional issue. This federal enclave within the district would remain part of the District of Columbia and the rest of the city would be part of the new state under the 1990’s proposal for statehood.

As the above review indicates, while much has been written about the legalities behind giving District residents self-rule and congressional representation, little scholarly work has specifically considered what would be necessary to gain popular support to achieve statehood for the District. Rather the emphasis has been on determining whether or not D.C.’s goal should be statehood. This leaves unanswered the practical question of how to turn the tide and gain support outside the District for its statehood. In other words, have messages in favor of statehood been fashioned, or framed, in ways that could gain the movement the popular support needed to achieve its goal or has the movement lacked a solid basis by which to attract a political movement.

## Framing Theory

Framing theory is an important approach to looking at messaging in political science. The effectiveness of a social movement’s campaign is often dependent on how well the framing of issues wins popular support for the movement. Politicians involved in larger political and social movements often frame or reframe issues or a message to achieve a desired response from the general public. A change in how an issue is framed or presented to the general public, can have a substantial effect on how the general public perceives an issue. William Gamson and Andre Modiligliani (1987) reveal how the opposition to affirmative action policies reframed this issue to promote negative reactions from the general public. The opponents of affirmative action went from asking “Have African Americans earned or do they deserve special rights?” (Druckman, 2001, p. 227), to asking “Is it fair to sacrifice the rights of whites to advance the needs of African Americans?” (p. 227). Gamson and Modiligliani (1987) assert that framing the question around “special rights” for African Americans resonated less with the public than concerns about the fairness of whites sacrificing for African American gains (Druckman, 2001). The reframing of the affirmative action issue from one of an unfair advantage to something that actively causes harm to a group was more likely to lead people to oppose the policy. This change in framing of the issue plays to emotions and concerns that Whites will suffer, if affirmative action exists.

Framing theory involves a complex understanding of how citizens process and make decisions. Human beings have a need to organically develop frames to organize the large amount of information around them (Simon and Xenos, 2000). According to Todd Gitlin, “frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” (in Druckman, 2001, p. 227). These frames are then used on everything in day to day life. We process this information for every part of life, including how we as individuals frame our perspectives on various political issues.

James Druckman (2001) explores the importance of political framing and reframing in politics. His work concludes that the framing of the issues matters a great deal to how the general public is positioned on issues. Drunkman uses different examples of how an issue can be reframed to prove the great impact that framing has on American politics. Although it is easy to presume how one would view the process of framing as a manipulative process, Druckman (2001) explains that framing is just another cognitive learning process. Sometimes framing theory reveals a larger incompetence with the general public in truly understanding key issues and other times it does not.

Thomas Nelson, Zoe Oxley, and Rosalee Clawson (1997) describe framing as the procedure used by which a communication source “defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” for a given audience” (p. 567). The study of framing is critical to understanding how communication sources are able to shape public opinion in political science (Nelson, Oxley, Clawson, 1997). Various communication sources (including different forms of media) often are able to construct public opinion on key social and political issues by the way an issue is constructed to the audience. Players in the social and political arena (i.e., politicians and social activists) are able to shift public opinion on various issues and causes, sometimes dramatically, by adjusting the framing of an issue. For example, in the framing of the debate over the Affordable Care Act proponents of the legislation framed the debate as an attempt to expand health care to those unjustly denied health insurance. The opposition framed the issue as government overreach making health care decisions for people. The battle between these frames played out in the battle for public opinion among the American people and in Congress, with proponent’s ultimately taking the edge. The success of a side to frame issues is, therefore, critical to the success of a public or social cause.

The collective action framework is an essential part of understanding framing theory. According to professors Robert Benford and David Snow (2000), the collective action framework considers large problems that can be addressed by policy. Collective action frames have two components. The first component is the action oriented function or the core framing tasks, and the second refers to a discursive process that attends to the core framing tasks to generate collective action (Benford and Snow, 2000). The core framing tasks in the first component help work to make a policy change a reality in the second component of the collective action framework.

The core framing task consists of three parts: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. For any social-political movement to be successful, each of the parts of the first component of Benford and Snow’s (2000) collective action framework must be met. Diagnostic framing consists of the social movement articulating the injustice that their cause is fighting to address. By pointing out the problems that the movement wants to address, the movement can use other framing methodology to achieve a desired outcome. The prognostic framing component consists of the movement providing “a plan of attack or at least basic strategies to carry out a plan of successfully leading a social movement to meet an injustice (Benford and Snow, 2000). Motivational framing is the “call to arms” the social movement calling upon individuals to be actively involved in collective actions to meet various injustices (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Social movements rely upon using all three parts of the first component of the collective action framework. When a social movement meets the necessary diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing requirements, then the second component of the collective action framework can come into place and the suggested policy reforms desired by the movement can become a reality. When applying the collective action framework to the D.C. statehood movement, one must only focus on the first component of the theory, the core framing tasks of the collective Action framework. The second component, which involves the policy change, is less critical at this time because a law giving D.C. statehood is nowhere near implementation in the United States. The components of the collective action framework consist of a balance between pragmatic and emotional framing techniques. Motivational framing relies on an emotionally structured argument. Prognostic framing relies on a pragmatic structure of framing. Diagnostic framing relies on a combination of pragmatic and emotionally structured arguments to be successful.

Benford and Snow’s (2000) work explains that for any social movement to be successful in achieving its legislative goals, each part of the core framing tasks must be met. This means that effective social movements must meet Benford and Snow’s qualifications for diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. Since the 1970’s, the D.C. statehood movement has been trying to frame an argument to win popular support for its causes. Through different arguments, the movement has attempted to pick up wide-spread public support for its statehood. Although these attempts have been made, the D.C. statehood issue has struggled to win popular support from the American public. Politicians from the District of Columbia, such as Eleanor Holmes Norton, have seemingly tried to use diagnostic framing to reveal to the American public the many injustices facing the citizens of Washington D.C. (Norton & Biley, 1993). However, for decades, the statehood movement has struggled to make gains in popular support outside the district. Therefore, it is necessary to study Benford and Snow’s core framing tasks to explore whether or not the statehood movement has been framing the issue of statehood the right way, meaning providing diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing that includes emotional framing.

Although most of the literary consensus is that action needs to be taken to address the injustices facing the citizens of Washington D.C, there is wide-spread consensus that the statehood movement hasn’t made much progress recently and isn’t about to anytime soon. Nevertheless, the movement has progressed since its infancy in the 1970’s. While the statehood movement continues to rely on radical voices, today the movement also has the full support of the Mayor of Washington D.C and the Council of the District of Columbia, as well as larger support among congressional Democrats. However, one must not make the presumption that the statehood movement has anyway near the active political support needed to become a successful political movement. Still, many individuals have concerns about the constitutionality, practicality and political feasibility of any statehood solution. Therefore, framing theory can be applied to the statehood movement to see if the movement can adjust its messaging to gain more active support from the general public of the United States. Benford and Snow’s core framing requirements lays out a benchmark to determine whether or not a political movement is successful. If one was to apply Benford and Snow’s theory to the Statehood movement, the movement would have to meet fundamental diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing requirements. Meeting these requirements would allow the statehood movement to engage the general public enough to push for a successful statehood solution.

I believe that the D.C. statehood movement has failed to find the appropriate balance in framing the issue of statehood in a manner that would mobilize social forces to ensure its success. Therefore, I am interested in investigating how different frames have been used on the issue of D.C. statehood in order to provide some insight regarding the difficulties the D.C. Statehood movement has had getting off the ground. Looking at the Collection Action framework provided by Benford and Snow as well as pragmatic and emotional frames may provide insight into the theoretical framework used in structuring the arguments for and against statehood and whether there are any meaningful gaps in the framing structure that would provide insight into the limitations the statehood movement has encountered over the past few decades.

# Methods

Daniel Diermeier and Timothy Feddersen (2000) provide analysis on the importance of committee hearings on American public debate. They conclude that although Congressional hearings have been planned out in advance of the hearing itself, Congressional hearings play an important role in determining the success of legislation. Committee hearings “provide intrinsic information generated through hearings through expert testimony” (p. 53) and strategic benefits that come from a Committee’s decision to hold a hearing (Diermeier and Feddersen, 2000). The choice of Representatives Walter Fauntroy and Eleanor Holmes Norton to push for congressional hearings in the 1980’s and 1990’s signaled a push to win momentum for the political and social cause of D.C. statehood. The committee hearings on the issue of statehood represented a critical setting where both the proponents and opponents of statehood were able to put forward arguments in support of their cause before Congress and the general public. Although congressional hearings are not the setting for all political debate on the issue of statehood, this setting is critical to the framing of the national debate on the issue of statehood. Therefore, looking at the different committee hearings is an important way to gauge the success of any political or social movement. So while there are many places to look for rhetoric for and against D.C. statehood, congressional hearings offer a convenient and reasonable place to look for the types of arguments forwarded by statehood’s proponents and opponents.

In order to investigate how D.C. statehood has been framed, I conducted a content analysis with qualitative coding of hearings on the issue of statehood held in the United States House of Representatives from the early 1980’s to 1993. In analyzing the transcripts from all eight hearings held during this period, I coded two different dimensions (pragmatic vs. emotional frames; core framing requirements: diagnostic, prognostic, motivational). I sought out these hearings on databases including Hein Online.

The qualitative coding that I conducted was done on all blocks of text in the hearing transcripts. I coded the text for the themes of whether arguments relied on emotion or pragmatism to frame the issue of D.C. statehood to the American people also coded for Benford and Snow’s (2000) core framing requirements (diagnostic, prognostic, motivational). In particular, I wanted to determine whether the proponents of statehood had fully met the requirements for collective action. Additionally, I identified arguments as in favor of statehood (pro) or against statehood (con) while coding. Table 1 more clearly defines each of the themes in my coding framework.

**Table 1: Coding Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Coding Categories** | **Description** |
| Emotional | A frame that invokes one’s personal connection to an issue, a passion, or a fundamental injustice to America’s larger values that needs to be immediately addressed by a political or social cause. |
| Pragmatic | A frame that relies on logic, reason, or compromise to respond to a political social cause. |
| Diagnostic | A frame that outlines basic injustices defined by a political or social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). |
| Prognostic | A frame that shows a plan of attack or a criticism of the plan of attack taken by the political or social movement. Any framing that shows foresight or strategy in achieving the goals of a political or social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). |
| Motivational | A frame that inspires others to call to arms and rally behind an issue. Language that encourages others to rally behind an issue, or any criticism of the lack of calling to arms in a political or social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). |
| Pro | Arguments in favor of statehood. |
| Con | Arguments against statehood. |

These analyses looked for explanations of the success or failure of the statehood movement to grow and win popular support for its cause in the decades since the 1970’s. All coding was conducted using nVivo, qualitative data analysis software. Also, to ensure coding was free from bias, I asked a research professional to perform an intercoder reliability test. The intercoder reliability test yielded agreement rates above 90 percent on each code, indicating acceptable coding reliability. Specifically, there was a 97.12% match between myself and the second coder on the emotional code, 92.80% on pragmatic, 97.47% on diagnostic, 97.81% on prognostic, 99.80% on motivational, 92.80% on Pro, and 95.74% on the Con code.

The first part of my study concerns the pragmatic and emotional frames, while the second includes diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames. For each analysis, I coded all hearings for the associated coding categories (frames) described in Table 1, as well as for the pro and con perspectives. I used the Nodes tool in the nVivo program to help me identify the arguments used in each committee hearing for each type of frame. For example, with emotional frames, I looked for the content of the emotional frames to identify each argument that advocates and opponents used that I had coded as reflecting an emotional frame. I created tables of arguments that appeared in each coding category, separated into those that advocated for statehood and those that opposed stated, and organized by hearing so I could determine whether the arguments had changed over time. Additionally, I counted the number of times (frequency) each hearing reflected each type of frame, separated into pro and con, for each of the eight hearings. These two types of information helped provide insight into the types of arguments used in the statehood debate from the 1980’s and 1990’s and draw conclusions about potential gaps with frames that would have been helpful in mobilizing support.

My primary interest was in determining the different types of arguments used in the D.C. statehood debate. The two parts of my research focus on pragmatic vs emotional frames frames) and the core components in the collective action framework (motivational, prognostic, diagnostic) frames. This study was conducted to determine whether or not the proponents of statehood left a significant gap in the framing structure of the case for statehood. I looked to determine whether or not a lack of pragmatic or emotional frames or a missing core component from the collective action framework would help provide insight to the difficulties the D.C. statehood movement had towards gaining momentum.

# Results

I conducted a comprehensive qualitative coding analysis of all hearings on the issue of statehood held in the United States House of Representatives from 1981 to 1993. These hearings represent all hearings held in the United States House of Representatives on the issue of statehood. Before describing the results of my analyses examining the two components of my research, I first present the general context in which the hearings were held with a brief analysis of participants at these hearings.

Hearing Participants

The poor attendance of the members of the U.S. House of Representative’s Committee on the District of Columbia reveals D.C. statehood’s position as a backburner issue in American politics even when the issue was publicly at its peak. As shown in Table A-1 in the Appendix, in both 1985 and 1986, Walter Fauntroy (the non-voting representative from Washington D.C) was the only member of the committee to attend hearings on statehood. The poor attendance of Republicans throughout these hearings compared to Democrats shows that the Republican Party did not take the concept of statehood seriously during this period. Following the poor attendance at these committee hearings, it was clear that D.C. statehood was too much of a backburner issue to be treated seriously in American political debate. These general findings serve as backdrop to the advocates, who were largely aligned with the Democratic Party, and opponents, who were largely aligned with the Republican Party.

## Pragmatic and Emotional Frames

In relation to the investigation of pragmatic and emotional frames, the data indicate that the pro-statehood representatives and witnesses at the beginning of the statehood hearings in 1981 embraced emotional arguments for statehood at a slightly higher frequency compared to their use of pragmatic arguments (see Figure 1). Emotional framing is the use of frames that invoke feeling that would help benefit a political or social movement. However, in 1986, the data shows the pro-statehood positon started using many more pragmatic arguments to support their cause and continued to do so from this point onward. Although the analysis indicates a sizeable increase, Table A-2 in the appendix supports that among statehood advocates the range of emotional arguments was broader in most years than pragmatic arguments. Therefore, there was not a balance of both emotional and pragmatic frames in the arguments forwarded by the statehood advocates.

In the early years, opponents of statehood forwarded few arguments, emotional or pragmatic, picking-up with a strong focus on pragmatic arguments starting in 1987, a year after statehood advocates increased their use of pragmatic arguments. In subsequent years, opponents of statehood continued to raise pragmatic arguments at a rate outpacing that of statehood advocates.

**Figure 1: Frequency by Year of Emotional and Pragmatic Frames**



NANA

As shown in Figure 2 (and in greater detail in Table A-2 of the appendix), both the advocates and opponents of statehood appear reluctant to use emotional framing in the first statehood hearing in 1981. However, in 1985 the advocates of statehood embrace emotional framing. A variety of different frames are used in the hearing as shown in the Table A-2 in the appendix, including the tyranny of taxation without representation, D.C. citizens being denied the right of representation and the other rights that come with being a full citizen, D.C.’s unique status as the only Capital in the world that denies representation and D.C residents fighting and dying in War without representation all emerged as emotional framing themes during the hearings in 1985 and 1986. The results indicate an advantage of emotional appeals in helping describe the various injustices facing the statehood movement. These frames continue to be a large part of the pro- statehood position for the next few committee hearings. The analysis indicates that the opposition to statehood appears to take a little bit longer to embrace emotional framing in the statehood hearing. In the second 1987 hearing, the analysis shows that the opposition to statehood embraced emotional framing. As described in Table A-2, these new emotional arguments used by statehood opponents included focusing on the injustice of having the new state of New Columbia receive a federal payment that other states do not receive. The themes highlighted in Table A-2 show the opposition argues that this payment would create a super state that would give D.C more power than any other state in the country. Both of these themes were an emotional frame intended to make D.C. residents fearful and other Americans see statehood as inequitable.

Following 1987, the themes of the data reveal that opposition to statehood became more comfortable using emotional framing than they were in the early 1980’s. As the pro-statehood side grew and became a more significant force, the opposition grew along with it. When the advocates for statehood began using more emotional arguments in the mid 1980’s, the opposition appears to have made an effort to curb the momentum of the proponents of statehood by growing their pro-statehood emotional arguments alongside. Emotional arguments are important to diagnosing the various injustices of an issue, mobilizing others around a side on an issue. The use of this emotion is mainly a necessary part of using diagnostic and motivational framing.

The data indicate that both the advocates and opponents of statehood relied on a large number of pragmatic arguments. Pragmatic framing consists of the use of logical and reasoned frames to benefit a political or social movement. As shown in Table A-2 in the appendix, starting in the mid 1980’s, the pro-statehood side begins focusing on the pragmatic changes made to the New Columbia Constitution, the economic advantages that might come from statehood, and how D.C meets the criteria of a state. Going into the 1990’s D.C. statehood advocated embrace more emotional arguments than pragmatic arguments. However, pragmatic arguments continue to be used in the 1990’s. The opposition to statehood also heavily relies on pragmatic arguments from the early 1980’s to the 1990’s (excluding the hearing in 1985 where the opposition did not participate). The analysis indicates most common pragmatic arguments from the opposition to statehood focused on the Constitutional inconstancies of statehood and the issues that came with the federal payment. There was no major curb in momentum with the statehood opponents’ use of pragmatic arguments.

## Core Framing Components: Diagnostic, Prognostic and Motivational

As shown in Figure 2, the frequency of core framing components for advocates and opponents of D.C. Statehood indicate increasing use of core frames by both sides over time, which may indicate an increasing informal understanding by both advocates and opponents of the need to cover all three core components to mobilize. The data reveal that the three core framing components were not fully realized in arguments forward by D.C. statehood advocates. Although the pro-statehood side did use a heavy amount of diagnostic and prognostic framing, motivational framing was largely ignored. Therefore, the proponents of statehood did not fully meet Benford and Snow’s (2000) requirements for a political and social movement to be successful.

The more detailed results in Table A-3 in the appendix indicate that motivational framing does not appear often in these hearings. Motivational framing consists of a call to arms to get others to join and actively participate in a political or social movement. Although calling others to arms is not a traditional calling card of committee hearings, finding a way to motivate and organize others is an important part of successful political, social movements. Rallying others is especially important in the D.C statehood movement, a movement that sometimes prides itself as being part of the larger national Civil Rights Movement in the United States. In the first hearing of 1992, the Table A-3 above indicates some motivational framing was used to point out that the D.C movement would likely grow and mobilize as part of a larger social political movement. However, there is very little attention in these hearings to calling together Congress or the American people to immediately address the statehood issue from either the proponent’s perspective or the opposition perspective. This lack of motivational framing makes D.C. Statehood appear to look like a backburner issue to other political issues t that have been left unaddressed.

**Figure 2: Frequency by Year of Core Framing Components**

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NANA

The data indicate that diagnostic framing has been both embraced by the advocates and opposition to statehood. Diagnostic framing is the framing of basic injustices that cause a political or social movement to organize. Beginning in the first statehood hearings in 1981, 1985, 1986, the pro-statehood side made a large effort to embrace diagnostic framing. The main diagnostic frame in these committee hearings used by statehood advocates is the injustice of the denial to 600,000 D.C. residents of American’s basic right to representation. However, some other frames were also embraced throughout these early hearings including the tyranny of taxation without representation and the fact that the United States is the only capital in the world not to offer represents in to its capital city in the national legislature. The same diagnostic frames are consistently used throughout these hearings. New diagnostic themes are rarely introduced, although there is a heavy use of diagnostic arguments in these hearings. The advocates placed a heavy reliance on a small number of diagnostic frames rather than relying on a variety of different frames.

In the early hearings from 1981, 1985, and 1987, the opposition to statehood shied away from using many diagnostic frames for their cause. However, in 1987 the opposition began to embrace their own diagnostic frames, with the opponents to statehood repeating their diagnostic arguments 188 times during the 1992 hearings. The specific arguments that reflected a diagnostic frame, shown in the Table A-3, consisted of the federal payment being an unfair burden to other states and the voter approved constitution for New Columbia being ignored in favor of an entirely new document that was not the expressed will of D.C. voters.

Framing theory indicates that the framing of injustices is a necessary component to any successful political or social movement. Framing injustices helps educate the general public about the importance of particular issue. Once education takes place, politicians and members of the general public will be inspired to act on behalf of that issue. The analyses shown that both the proponents and opponents of statehood embrace diagnostic framing to educate the general public and Congress of the moral virtues and the larger injustice of what they are saying and what they are fighting for.

The data indicate the use of prognostic framing in these hearings is often used by the proponents of statehood. Prognostic framing is the use of frames to reveal the “plan of attack” for the statehood movement to be successful. The analysis in Table A-3 in the Appendix shows the proponents did much to show this plan of attack including make pragmatic changes to the original New Columbia Constitution to make it more likely for Congress to pass statehood legislation, to follow the path other states like Tennessee and Hawaii, took to becoming states. By relying on voter-approved constitutions to petition Congress to becoming a state, explaining why the statehood movement’s strategy of letting Congress legislation the statehood issue was appropriate. The themes within the data indicate that prognostic frames were used heavily and in an extremely detailed manner by the proponents of statehood in these statehood hearings from 1981-1993. The opposition to statehood spent their time offering their proposed alternatives to the plan of attack taken by the proponents of statehood. These alternative plans of attack that appeared in the data and in the Table A-3 offered a different and compromised version of addressing the problems of the status of Washington D.C. These alternative solutions included a Voting Rights Amendment for D.C and retrocession with Maryland. Prognostic framing is necessary for a successful political and social movement because it shows some logical planning and foresight that would allow for the cause everyone is fighting to be successful. The statehood movement put a lot of work into taking the steps necessary to have a plan of attack that would be lead to statehood.

# Conclusion

## Framing Arguments for and Against Statehood

There is an evolution from the 1980’s to the 1990’s in the frames used to debate the statehood issue. The opposition to the statehood movement did not initially appear to take the pro-statehood side seriously. In the first hearing in 1981, the opposition outlined their opinion that the statehood issue is extremely premature. At the time, D.C had just been granted home-rule less than a decade earlier and statehood seemed to be a more radical idea. Heading into 1985, there continued to be very little effort by the opposition to participate in these hearings. The opposition to statehood was entirely absent from the 1985 hearing on the issue of statehood. This hearing was dominated by the non-voting delegate from Washington D.C., Walter Fauntroy, and included only advocates for statehood as witnesses. By the two committee hearings in 1987, the analysis reveals the opposition to statehood had become much more pronounced and focused. The themes from the analysis show that the main issues the opposition focused on in their objections to statehood were the constitutional challenges that would arise from statehood from the District Clause and the 23rd Amendment, and the unfair nature of the federal payment. Although the opposition did not appear to focus on as many injustices or problems as the pro-statehood movement, the focus they put on these issues communicated sufficient seeds of doubt in D.C. statehood both for Congress and the general public.

Following the 1987 hearing, the analysis showed that the opposition played a much larger role in the hearings and in the witnesses testifying in the hearings. This effort by the opposition seemed to signal that their side took the pro-statehood side more seriously. Therefore, the themes that arose from the analysis indicate the opposition ramped up efforts to frame the narrative of the statehood debate. The data further indicate that another approach taken by the opposition to statehood was to offer alternative solutions to the injustices facing Washingtonians that would provide remedies without D.C. becoming a state. Thus, the opposition began to capitalize on the proponent’s diagnostic framing of injustices by offering different solutions. For example, analyses indicated that those opposed to statehood began to support granting D.C. voting representation and encouraged retrocession with Maryland as alternatives to statehood. As a result of these alternatives, the opposition was able to acknowledge that there were problems with the status quo, as described by proponents, while also expressing a belief that there were different ways of implementing reforms that would not undermine opponents’ own diagnostic frames that D.C. statehood did not align with the Constitution of the United States.

The analysis also indicated an evolution in the arguments forwarded by proponents of statehood from the 1980s into the 1990s. In the first hearing in 1981, the pro-Statehood movement was younger and timid in bringing up the emotional injustices facing Washingtonians. The analyses revealed the main issue brought up by the statehood movement in all hearings was the injustice that Washingtonians face by not having representation. However, other issues, including D.C.’s position in the world as being the only capital city denying fundamental rights (including the right to representation) to its citizens, the many Washingtonian’s that pay taxes and fight and die in war without representation, did not surface in the analysis of early hearings. Such framing first came up in the analysis in 1985. In 1986 and 1987 the movement was under the leadership of the non-voting D.C. delegate, Walter Fauntroy, who appeared to be leading the movement away in a pragmatic direction. From 1987 onwards, the pro-statehood movement began relying on a combination of pragmatic and emotional arguments in their framing. The data indicate that the framing of the D.C. statehood movement began to ally itself as part of the larger Civil Rights movement with the help of Civil Rights activists (e.g., Jesse Jackson Sr), which is emotional framing. The data indicate that the pro-statehood side heavily embraced emotional and diagnostic framing throughout these hearings, which could be used to explain to general public the importance of statehood and the unjust treatment of Washingtonians by the federal government.

The importance of using pragmatic arguments in debates regarding the issue of statehood is that it makes arguments seem logical and reasonable. pragmatic arguments can also provide effective rebuttals to the arguments of the other side. Pragmatic arguments seem to mainly work well with prognostic framing, as political and social movements rely on pragmatism to make sure that the plan of attack of the movement seems logical and focused. The logic and reason provided by pragmatic arguments are an important part of any political and social movement.

## Summary

The data indicate that the pro-statehood side from the beginning of the statehood hearings in 1981 embraced emotional arguments for statehood at a higher frequency and higher amount of frames compared to the proponents’ use of pragmatic arguments. However, in 1986, the data show that pro-statehood positon started using many more pragmatic arguments to support their cause. Although the analysis indicates there was this sizeable increase, arguments coded as emotional were much more common for the pro-statehood than pragmatic arguments. Therefore, a balance between these two types of frames was not evident in the D.C. statehood movement’s framing of their issue.

The analyses also revealed that all three components of the core framing parts were not well represented in the statehood movement’s arguments. In Robert Benford and David Snows’ (2000) collective action framework all three core framing components of motivational, diagnostic, prognostic must be met for a political movement to be successful. Although the pro-statehood side did use a heavy amount of diagnostic and prognostic framing, motivational framing was left ignored. Therefore, the proponents of statehood did not fully meet Benford and Snow’s (2000) requirements for a political and social movement to be successful. A large part in what seems to be missing on the pro-statehood side is a mobilization of support. Statehood is often an issue left on the backburner of American political debate. The evidence for this could be seen in the lack of hearings on the issue of statehood in both chambers of Congress and the poor attendance of Representatives at these Hearings. As shown in the analyses here, the statehood movement has not been successful in mobilizing enough activism and public support to make D.C Statehood a front burner story in America’s political landscape. This shortcoming is likely tied to statehood advocates’ inability to frame all three components together due to little use of motivational frames.

The opponents to statehood also did not meet Benford and Snow’s (2000) requirements for a successful political movement. The data indicate that only one of the three components of core framing (diagnostic) framing was met by the opposition to Statehood. The analyses indicate that the opposition did not have much motivational or prognostic framing. Due to the fact that neither side met the core component requirements of framing, neither side has led a successful political or social movement on the issue of statehood. Therefore, statehood continues to be an issue that is still part of our debate in present time.

Following the last Committee Hearing held on the issue of statehood in 1993, Eleanor Holmes Norton and the D.C Statehood movement compromised and shifted focus to trying to gain full voting representation for D.C., rather than Statehood. Voting representation was the primary focus of two committee hearings held in 2004 and 2007 in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, the movement did not gain much traction for voting rights at that time. Therefore, the issue of statehood has lingered for a long time with the first Congressional hearing on the issue of statehood since 1993, in the United States Senate. The attendance at this hearing was extremely poor with only two senators attending. The low level of engagement of the U.S. Senate in the first hearing on statehood in twenty years showed that the D.C. statehood movement has a long way to go to become a forefront issue in American politics.

## Limitations

The limitation of my research comes from the fact that the only text analyzed was committee hearings. Although Committee hearings are an important component of research, they are not the only political arena that discuss the key issue of statehood. Committee hearings have a certain protocol, and it might be the case that witnesses and representatives adjusted their language to the setting. There is also a high amount of formal language that is expected to be used by the Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee. Certain language (less formal) might be used in a different setting such as public speeches, television and media appearances, social media presence. Therefore, future research could be conducted on the different arenas the statehood movement is fought out in to see if the same frames found in this study are missing in the broader public arena, too.

## Future Framing

 The overall aim of this study is to offer avenues that might allow proponents of statehood to gather momentum for their movement. It is critical that the D.C. Statehood movement improve its visibility as an important issue in American political debate and find a way to get Congress to care about the issue. This study shows that a large part of what is missing on the pro-statehood side is a mobilization of support. Motivational framing in support of statehood are likely needed in conjunction with prior diagnostic and prognostic arguments. More specifically, proponents need to focus on having D.C. residents rally for statehood, pull non-D.C. residents in by linking their cause to a broader fight for America’s democratic ideals, or induce engagement through other calls to become involved in collective action.

The opposition to statehood among Republicans in Congress has been unified since the origins of the statehood movement. Therefore, the bleak political conditions in which the statehood movement operates makes success seem extremely difficult. These collective action frames will not immediately bring about statehood for D.C. However, only by meeting the collective action core requirements for framing is D.C. likely to ever overcome the great opposition that it faces in achieving democratic representation for its residents.

The collective action framework is an essential measurement provided to study the steps needed for a social or political movement to achieve success. By framing fundamental injustices, showing planning and foresight, and inspiring others (both within and beyond D.C.) as a part of a call to arms, political or social movements can result in success. In so doing they rely on the balance of pragmatism and emotion that exists within the collective action framework. The opposition to statehood rely heavily on diagnostic framing in the hearings investigated in this study. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the pro-statehood movement to win the diagnostic battle and ensure all Americans view D.C.’s current lack of statehood as an injustice that needs to be addressed.

Although the proponents of the statehood fight have certainly not been able to meet all of the components of the Collective Action framework, neither has the opposition to statehood. Therefore, the issue of statehood still lingers in the political landscape decades after these committee hearings. Both sides of the statehood debate still have the opportunity to meet the requirements necessary for a political or social movement. However, the path to overcome the obstacles to statehood, or to kill the expressed will of D.C. voters, is difficult for either side of the statehood fight. In order to overcome these real obstacles, proponents of statehood need to find a way to form a broad coalition of support for their cause, which is actively engaged and motivated to be a part of a larger political and social movement for change.

In the upcoming 2020 primary, some steps have been taken by advocates to garner the attention of presidential candidates and to make D.C. statehood an issue that is on the forefront of American political debate. A group calling itself “Iowans for DC Statehood” (see [iowansfordcstatehood.com](https://iowansfordcstatehood.com/about-us)) has been posing questions about D.C. statehood to Democratic candidates that visit the state. Although both President Clinton and Obama were sympathetic to the statehood cause, neither engaged in supportive actions. This group wants to ensure that the Democratic Party’s candidate for the presidency is actively engaged in the struggle for D.C. statehood (de la Cuetara, 2019).

The Iowa group also reflects the type of broader coalition needed from Americans all over the country to mobilize around the issue of D.C. statehood. Even residents from places far away from the city of Washington need to be a part of the movement for action on an issue that has been on the backburner of American political debate for decades. Even though there is significant Republican opposition to statehood, the proponents of statehood need to find a way to form as broad a network of support for statehood as possible to mobilize around the issue. This support needs to come from all around the country, not just from D.C. residents and D.C. leaders.

The collection of hearings on D.C. statehood in the U.S. House of Representatives highlight the lack of engagement on the issue of statehood from both Democrats and Republicans. Hearings on D.C. Statehood often consisted of local D.C. activists testifying to only the non-voting Representative for D.C. The poor attendance in these Congressional hearings embodies not only the backburner position of D.C. Statehood in comparison to other American political issues, but also the lack of passion and enthusiasm to organize on statehood among statehood activists. In order to achieve success, the prominent political leaders of the Democratic Party need to show a level of passion and enthusiasm for the cause to make the issue be taken seriously in American political debate. Although the obstacles of Republican opposition to statehood will remain fierce, the D.C. statehood movement does not stand a chance of success if the issue is not seen as one be taken seriously by proponents of statehood. To show that D.C. Statehood is an issue taken seriously by Democratic politicians, there needs to be a mobilization of active support on the issue on a level that has not been seen before.

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# Appendix

**Table A-1: Members and Witnesses Attending Committee Hearings with Affiliation Information**

| **Year** | **Members of Committee on District of Columbia**  |  **Committee Witnesses**  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1981 | * Ronald Dellums, California (D)
* Walter Fauntroy, Washington D.C (D)
* George Leland, Texas (D)
* William Gray, Pennsylvania (D)
* Michael Barnes, Maryland (D)
* Mervyn Dymally, California (D)
* Stewart McKinney, Connecticut (R)
* Stanford Parris, Virginia (R)
* Thomas Bliley Jr. Virginia (R)
 | * Robert Daniel, Virginia (R)
* Arlington Dixon, Chairman of Council of District of Columbia
* Hilda Howland- D.C. Council Member at Large
* Barbara Washington- Assistant City Administrator for Intergovernmental Relations
 |
| 1985 | * Walter Fauntroy, Washington D.C (D)
 | * Josephine Butler- Chairperson for D.C. Statehood Commission
* Charles Cassell- President of D.C Constitutional Convention
* Joseph Sellers- member of task force on Constitution for District of Columbia
* David Clarke- Chairman of Council of the District of Columbia
* Hilda Mason- Council Member for District of Columbia
 |
| 1986 | * Walter Fauntroy, Washington D.C. (D)
 | * Louis Bograd, Partner of Arnold & Porter, Washington, DC,
* Charles I. Cassell, president, D.C. Statehood Constitutional Convention
* Andrew Brimmer , president, Brimmer & Co., Inc
* Otis Cochran professor of law, University of Tennessee
* Robert Ebel , former executive director of the District of Columbia and Minnesota Tax Revision Commission
* Paul Greenburg chairperson, Americans for Democratic Action, Greater Washington Chapter on behalf of Statehood Committee of Self-Determination for the District of Columbia
* John Hechinger,  president, Hechinger Co
* Paul Kirk Jr.  chairman of the Democratic National Committee,
* Courts Oulahan member of the D.C. Bar and delegate to the D.C. Constitutional Convention,
* Peter Raven-Hansen, professor of law, George Washington University Law Center
* Lucy Reuben  vice president, Financial
* Research Associates, Inc., and associate professor of finance, George Mason University
* Stephen Saltzburg,, professor of law, University of Virginia
* Philip Schrag, professor of law, Georgetown University
* Arthur Spitzer, legal director, American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital area
* Matthew Watson, former auditor for the District of Columbia
 |
| 1987A | * Ronald Dellums, California (D)
* Walter Fauntroy, Washington D.C (D)
* Stanford Paris, Virginia (R)
 | * Marion Barry., Jr., Mayor of the District of Columbia .
* David Clarke, Chairman of Council of District of Columbia
* James Dyke partner, Hunton & Williams.
* Fifty-one Star-A slide presentation on statehood for the District of Columbia by Emily Tagliabue and Lisa Faden
* Reginald Griffith, Executive Director, National Capital Planning Commission
* Cheryl Long director, Public Defender Service
* Patsy Mink, member, Hawaii Statehood Transition Team
* William Quinn former Governor of Hawaii
* Jason Newman, professor, Georgetown University Law Center
* Wilhelmina Rolark, Chairperson, Judiciary Committee, D.C. City Council .
* Charles Ruff, former U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia .
 |
| 1987B | * Ronald Dellums, California (D)
* Walter Fauntroy, Washington D.C (D)
* Romano Mazzoli, Kentucky (D)
* Mervyn Dymally, California (D)
* Alan Wheat, Missouri (D)
* Stanford Paris, Virginia (R)
* Larry Combest, Texas  (R)
* Lynn Martin, Illinois (R)
 | *None* |
| 1992A | * Mervyn Dymally, California (D)
* Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington D.C. (D)
* Dana Rohrabacher, California (R)
 | * Ronald Brown, chairman, National Democratic Party.
* Sam Smith- local D.C. activist
* Josephine D. Butler, former chairwoman, D.C. Statehood Party
* Ms. Daria Winter, vice chairwoman, D.C. Democratic State Committee;
* Timothy Cooper, Statehood Solidarity
* Committee
* Hon. Sharon Pratt Dixon, Mayor of Washington D.C.
* John A. Wilson Chairman of the City Council, Washington, DC:
* Joseph Drudi, president of the D.C. Federation of Citizens Associations.
* John Gager, Old Town Yacht Basin Associates
* Scott Huch, National Center for Privatization
* Hon. Rev. Jesse L Jackson,
* Hon. Florence Howard Pendleton, D.C.
* Statehood Senators;
* Hon. Charles J. Moreland, D.C. Statehood Representative:,
* Bill Lowrey, California (R)
* Leo McPherson
* Courts Oulahan,
* Ned Sloan, D.C. Statehood Compact Commission
* Madeleine Albright, president, Center for National Policy
* John W. Hechinger, chairman, Hechinger Co.;
* Eugene J. Rohrer; and James Robertson, Esq., president, D.C. Bar Association:
* Brazil, Hon. Harold, member, D.C. Council; and Norma Melendez, vice chairwoman,
* D.C. Common Cause: Harold Brazil
* Eugene Rohrer,.
* Floyd Brown., chairman, Citizens United, Inc..
* Bill Clinton, Governor of the State of Arkansas.
* Steven Diner , professor of history, George Mason University.
* Guy Durant ., D .C. resident.
* Tom Harkin, U.S. Senator from the State of Iowa
* Rodney Livingston, CEC-DICEE
* Harry Thomas D.C. Council
* Jack Evans- D.C. Council
* Hilda Mason-D.C. Council
* M McSweeney-Johnson, ., Concerned Citizens of the District of Columbia
* William Niskanen,
* Bruce Fein
* Jamie Raskin, , American University School of Law; and Peter Raven-Hansen, George
* Peter Raven Hansen
* Phillip Savoy, president, Native Washingtonian Club.
* Barbara Simmons, delegate, Constitutional Convention
* Douglas Wilder,, Governor of the State of Virginia
* Wallace Williams , president, Association for Black Veteran
 |
| 1992B | * Mervyn Dymally, California (D)
* Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington D.C. (D)
* Dana Rohrabacher, California (R)
* Thomas Biley Jr., Virginia (R)
 | * Charles Cooper,  Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge;
* Joseph E. diGenova, Esq., Manatt, Phelps, Phillips & Cantor;
* Professor Jules B. Gerard, professor of law, Washington University;
* Professor Peter Raven Hansen, Professor of law, George Washington University School of Law;
* Professor Jeffrey Standen, assistant professor of law, Willamette University;
* Professor Cass R. Sunstein, professor of law, University of Chicago Law
* Kenneth R., Bowling, historian/author;
* Claire Wadlington senior vice president, Lazard Freres & Co.
* Henry Butler, former chairman Law and Economics center, George Mason University School of Law;
* James Miller, Citizens for a Sound Economy;
* Frank Raines, vice chairman, Fannie Mae;
* Matthew S. Watson, Esq.: Butler, Henry
* Frank Raines.
* Forrest McDonald, distinguished university research professor, University of Alabama,
* prepared statement
* Steven Valentine., Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division, U.S. Department of Justice
 |
| 1993 | * Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington D.C. (D)
* Dana Rohrabacher, California (R)
* Pete Stark, California (D)
* John Lewis, Georgia (D)
* Jim McDermott, Washington (D)
*
 | * Sandra Martinez, Hope for Youth Program, El Centro De La Raza, Seattle, W A
* Ellis Foster, Hope for Youth Program, El Centro De La Raza, Seattle, WA Panel Two:
* Jamin Rankin, assistant professor of law, American University, Washington, D C Prepared
* Adam Harris Kurland, assistant professor of law, Howard University School of Law,
* Robert D. Ebel Ph.D., economist
* Julia Freeman, Ph.D., economist
* Mark Medish, Esq., Covington & Burling, Washington, D.C.
 |

**Table A-2: Emotional and Pragmatic Arguments by Year/Document Forwarded by Advocates and Opponents of Statehood for D.C.**

| **Year** | **Emotional** | **Pragmatic** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1981 | Advocates: * America has to live up to ideal and give D.C. representation

Opponents: * DC Statehood advocates are just noisy and unrealistic, referendum supporting statehood has no mandate
 | Advocates: *None*Opponents: * Presents economic problems
* Presents Constitutional problems (including District clause) (admitting new states to the union clause)
* Maryland has an interest into D.C being a state
* The Federal Government retains an interest in D.C.
 |
| 1985 | Advocates:* Advocates seek to end the tyranny of taxation without representation,
* to end treating D.C residents like those of South Africa denied human rights
* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital,
* the constitution is sacred,
* individuals have fought and died in war only to be denied representation,
* D.C. Deserves the opportunity to determine its own fate,
* Freedom is not free but D.C. will pay for it,
* the lack of rights given to D.C. is a blemish on the country,
* The New Columbia Constitution is a praiseworthy accomplishment,
* The D.C. statehood effort is representative of the will of D.C. voters

Opponents: *None* | Advocates: * The Revised Constitution worthy of serious consideration
* Most nations don’t discriminate against residents residing in the capital city
* The Federal Payment should continue
* D.C. should gain its own prosecutorial ability
* D.C. has the economic foundation to be a state
* Compromises must be made to get statehood
* D.C. should have its own tax revenue power

 Opponents: *None* |
| 1986 | Advocates:* Ending the tyranny of taxation without representation
* D.C. residents are dedicated to the statehood fight
* D.C. residents are seeking the same rights as other U.S. citizens including the right to representation,
* New Columbia is a dream,
* D.C status was unanticipated by our founders and grossly unfair to D.C. residents,
* D.C. residents are poised to be first-class citizens,
* American citizens are shocked by the rights of Washingtonians,
* the glaring inequities facing D.C have led to residents to fight for statehood,
* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation,
* This fight is a continuation of the push for civil rights in the 60’s,
* D.C is a melting pot of diversity,
* For years D.C was run by bigoted men,
* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital,
* D.C. Statehood is a compelling moral issue

Con* D.C is a haven for criminals,
* The D.C Constitution has mischief
 | Advocates: * D.C meets the criteria to be a state (supportive resources, sufficient population, the desire of people, commitment to democracy)
* D.C.’s population has changed beyond the founder’s intentions
* D.C is more than a haven for federal employees
* Congress has muddled the economic affairs of the District
* The Federal payment will be continued
* Statehood is the logical step to get full voting representation
* D.C. has the economic foundation for statehood
* The New Columbia Constitution has been fixed
* Even without the federal payment, D.C would survive
* D.C. could strive economically with statehood
* There is a federal interest in statehood
* The District will have the power to set its own taxes

Opponents: * Constitutional problems (including District clause), (23rd Amendment)
* The Convention should have been making the fixes to the Constitution and not a task force after the fact
* Congressional Representation is legal but statehood isn’t
* D.C. is too small to be considered a state
 |
| 1987A | Advocates:* D.C. residents are seeking the same rights as other U.S. citizens including the right to representation,
* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation, D.C Residents pay more taxes than many other states
* Mend the crack in the liberty bell on the 200th anniversary of the U.S Constitution
* Statehood for D.C. is within the founder’s vision of America
* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital,
* D.C. residents want to be treated like every other American

Opponents:* D.C belongs to more than the few who live there; it belongs to the nation
 | Advocates: * The country would benefit from the voices of D.C. representatives,
* D.C. is just simply following Hawaii’s approach to becoming a state (like Hawaii D.C could be a functional state)
* D.C. would benefit economically from statehood
* There is no justification for the disenfranchisement of D.C. voters
* D.C. can work out a new prison system

Opponents: * The founders intentionally didn’t make D.C. a state
* Maryland must consent for statehood to happen
* Constitutional problems (including District clause)
* The Federal Payment is a burden to taxpayers
 |
| 1987B | Advocates:* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital
* D.C. residents are seeking the same rights as other U.S. citizens including the right to
* representation,
* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation,
* D.C Residents pay more taxes than many other states
* D.C. residents want to be treated like every other American
* Statehood is consistent with founder’s vision

Opponents:* Imagine what would happen to D.C without proper oversight,
* This process tramples the constitution
* Statehood will be denied by federal city
* It is outrageous to think that D.C should get 500 million a year from the federal government
* One state should not supersede all others
* Statehood is not consistent with sovereignty
* D.C. residents in opposition to statehood are forced to accept it
 | Advocates:* D.C. meets the criteria to be a state (supportive resources, sufficient population, the desire of people, commitment to democracy
* There needs to be the intelligent and responsible process that gives D.C citizens the franchise of every other citizen
* The Federal payment is a payment not a gift
* There is precedent to the statehood process
* The 2rd Amendment would be moot or no longer applicable
* Regression isn’t what D.C. wants to do

Opponents:* Constitutional problems (Seizing property within the boundaries) (23rd Amendment) (District Clause)
* D.C. does not have the population or resources to be a state
* The voter approved constitution has been scrapped
* There is an American interest in the city of Washington that should be protected
* The Federal payment places a burden on other states
* D.C doesn’t have the population to be a state
 |
| 1992A | Advocates: * D.C. residents are seeking the same rights as other U.S. citizens including the right to
* Representation
* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation,
* D.C Residents pay more taxes than many other states
* D.C. Statehood is a moral issue
* Taxation without representation is tyranny
* The lack of rights of Washingtonians resembles the apartheid regime in South Africa
* Granting D.C. Statehood would likely make Congress more multiracial
* Washington D.C. needs to be a state -officially because it operates like one already
* The people of D.C. don’t consent to be governed by Maryland
* The oppression of the people of D.C. is a part of the legacy of slavery
* D.C. resembles the rest of America
* The Values of statehood are consistent with the Constitution
* D.C. is a melting pot of diversity
* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital
* D.C. isn’t the slum others make it out to be
* Statehood is a feminist issue
* Statehood is consistent with the values of the founding fathers
* Statehood is the continuation of the civil rights movement

Opponents: * D.C. belongs to the entire nation and not the few who live here
* A sense of national pride exists without having a pride in being a Washingtonian,
* D.C is already governed democratically by the D.C. council
 | Advocates: * D.C. does not want retrocession with Maryland,
* D.C. can economically support statehood
* D.C. can survive without the federal payment
* D.C. would be like every other state
* D.C has been exploited economically
* Statehood is not barred by the district clause or the 23rd Amendment
* The District can legally adjust its size
* There is no meaningful opposition to statehood in D.C.
* D.C. residents want the practical benefits of statehood
* D.C. should be able to govern without congressional retaliation
* Voters are well within their rights to make mistakes
* The District residents have maturity
* Arguments against statehood are emotional and political and not practical and ethical
* The Supreme Court would allow for Congress to have the power to admit D.C. as a state.
* The Constitution gives Congress the power to admit states with or without an amendment

Opponents: * Constitutional (District Clause) (23rd Amendment)
* Founding fathers intentionally created a capital independent from a state
* D.C. would get special treatment in the form of the federal payment
* Statehood is a distraction to facing the real problems facing D.C.
* D.C. doesn’t have a large enough population to be a state
* Voter turnout in the statehood referendum was only 24% of D.C.s population
* D.C. relied on the National Guard to stop the riots of 1978 and 1971
* D.C. needs to be more mature to be a state
* D.C is too corrupt to be a state
* D.C. has the highest education level of any city or state in the U.S and the most prosperous black population in the world
* Congress rarely overturns the D.C. council
* The seat of government would be shrunk to nothing
* D.C. does not rank well in efficiency for anything it does
* Statehood would result in complication in holding international receptions in D.C.
* D.C. doesn’t have the resources to be a state
* D.C gets more Federal aid than other cities and incapable of carrying a financial burden without the Federal Governments help
 |
| 1992 B | Advocates: * D.C. residents are seeking the same rights as other U.S. citizens including the right to Representation
* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation
* Statehood aligns with the principles of this country
* US is the only capital in the world denying participation in a national legislature for citizens in its capital
* Opponents: It would be unfair to give New Columbia control over Americas proud capital city
* Republicans who oppose statehood aren’t simply playing politics

Opponents:*None* | Advocates:* D.C. does not want retrocession with Maryland,
* D.C. can economically support statehood
* The Capital puts D.C in a unique position where its different from other territories
* Many states get Federal payment
* D.C. can survive without the federal payment
* Statehood is not barred by the district clause or the 23rd Amendment
* The Federal interest in D.C. will be protected
* D.C. has the population for statehood
* D.C. has a good credit rating
* The Federal Government has no authority to control D.C.s political independence
* The standards of democracy have changed since the time of the founding fathers

Opponents: * Constitutional (District Clause) (23rd Amendment)
* Maryland has a final say in whether D.C becomes a state
* The Statehood bill is poorly drafted
* Businesses will leave the District to Maryland and VA to avoid payroll tax
* Founding fathers intentionally created a capital independent from a state
* D.C. would get special treatment in the form of the federal payment
* Statehood is a distraction to facing the real problems facing D.C.
* D.C. doesn’t have a large enough population to be a state
* Republican opposition to statehood isn’t political
* Many Republicans supported granting D.C full voting representation
 |
| 1993 | Advocates:* D.C citizens fought and died and war and are denied representation
* D.C statehood is consistent with American values
* Statehood preserves the picturesque skyline of Washington
* D.C. residents pay more taxes than most states
* D.C is much like other countries that have denied basic democratic rights to their citizens

Opponents:* The continuation Federal payment would be discriminatory towards the other states,
* D.C. voters never ratified the changed version of the Constitution
* D.C. statehood is a flagrant violation of the rights of Virginia and Maryland
 | Advocates:* D.C. does not want retrocession with Maryland,
* The opposition to statehood is partisan
* D.C. can economically support statehood
* D.C. can survive without the federal payment
* D.C. would be like every other state
* The arguments against statehood have been already used against Alaska and Hawaii
* Statehood is not barred by the district clause or the 23rd Amendment
* The Constitution gives Congress the power to admit states with or without an amendment
* The Building restrictions for D.C will remain in place under statehood

Opponents: * Constitution (23rd Amendment)
* Maryland has a final say in whether D.C becomes a state
* There has been a failure to transfer federal land for statehood
* There is a problem with following building heights restrictions that would emerge with statehood
* Founding fathers intentionally created a capital independent from a state
* D.C. would get special treatment in the form of the federal payment
 |

**Table A-3: Motivational, Diagnostic, and Prognostic Arguments by Year/Document Forwarded by Advocates and Opponents of Statehood for D.C.**

| **Year** | **Motivational** | **Diagnostic** | **Prognostic** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1981 | Advocates:* Calling on Congress to pass statehood legislation
* Let’s establish a statehood committee to push for statehood.

Opponents: *None* | Advocates:* The district has suffered rank discrimination
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* Few States pay more taxes than D.C residents and don’t receive representation
* Congressman talk about democratic injustices in other countries but not in the nation’s capital

Opponents:* It would be unfair for D.C to continue to receive the federal payment
 | Advocates: * There will be appropriate powers held by the new state to still serve the interest of the capital

Opponents:* The process should require a Constitutional Amendment
* The referendum should be reviewed for Congressional Review.
* Maryland retrocession would be another option
 |
| 1985 | Advocates: *None*Opponents: *None* | Advocates:* There needs to be an end to the tyranny of taxation without representation
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* The U.S. is the only capital city in the world that denies representation capital cities

Opponents: *None* | Advocates: * The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* Appropriate changes were made to the legislation by the Statehood Task Force

Opponents: *None* |
| 1986 | Advocates:* Support for statehood has grown and will continue to grow,

  Opponents: *None* | Advocates: * District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* Congressman complain about democratic injustices elsewhere and deny citizens of the district rights
* There needs to be an end to the tyranny of taxation without representation
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away

Opponents:*None* | Advocates: * Congress has the Authority to make D.C a state
* DC will enter the union as a state on equal footing
* The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* Appropriate changes were made to the legislation by the Statehood Task Force

Opponents: *None* |
| 1987A | Advocates: Time to take a stand,Time to be loud,Trying to win support in CongressOpponents: *None* | Pro* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* Congressman complain about democratic injustices elsewhere and deny citizens of the district rights
* There needs to be an end to the tyranny of taxation without representation
* D.C. residents pay more taxes than most other states
* District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* America is the one country that denies representation to the capital city

Con* The Federal Payment is an unfair burden to other states.
 | Advocates: * The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* The goal of passing the legislation is coming closer than the proponents could have imagined
* D.C. is following a similar process that Hawaii did

Opponents:* Retrocession would be an alternative process to statehood
 |
| 1987B | Advocates: *None*Opponents: *None* | Advocates:* District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* District residents pay more in taxes than most other states
* There needs to be an end to the tyranny of taxation without representation

Opponents: * The District would be unfairly given federal payment
* Statehood would trample on the rights of the American people
* Statehood would Trample the Constitution
* Statehood would require D.C seizing beyond its boundaries
* The Voter approved constitution has been ignored
 | Pro* The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* Appropriate changes were made to the legislation by the Statehood Task Force
* Every State in the country can change the Constitution
* Compromises must have been made to the original constitution

Opponents: * There are many flaws with the statehood process,
* The updated constitution is an entirely new document then the one that the voters voted on
* There needs to be clarity on the executive officers of the state for there to be a state
 |
| 1992A | Advocates:* Trying to win support in Congress,
* Trying to win support from State Democratic parties
* Trying to win support from Republicans
* Support for statehood is growing from everywhere
* The Battle is our now

Opponents: There is no grounds-well support for statehood outside of D.C. | Advocates:* District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* Taxation without representation is tyranny
* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* D.C’s status is an international embarrassment
* Congress has abused its control of D.C

Opponents:* The Federal Payment is unfair to the other states
* Statehood violates states sovereignty
* The American people should bring about statehood-not Congress
 | Advocates:* Retrocession isn’t happening
* The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* The D.C constitution made it out of the convention unanimously
* Appropriate changes were made to the legislation by the Statehood Task Force
* Article 4 Section 3 is very clear with how new states are admitted to the union and it does not require an Amendment
* D.C voters expressed their desire for statehood through referendum

Opponents: * There must be Constitutional Amendment for statehood to happen,
* Legislation without an Amendment would only serve to create a second class entity that isn’t a state
* Retrocession with Maryland should be the alternative to statehood
* The D.C Constitution is cluttered, and extreme
 |
| 1992 B | Advocates: * There is a need for the people of the district to rally and mobilize
* The people of D.C want statehood

Opponents: *None* | Advocates:* District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* D.C’s status is an international embarrassment
* Congressman fight for democratic rights in other countries and not in dc
* D.C pays more in taxes than any other state.

Opponents:* The Federal Payment is unfair to the other states
 | Advocates:* Retrocession isn’t an option
* A Constitutional Amendment for statehood is not necessary.

Opponents: * There are other solutions other than statehood
* The updated constitution is an entirely new document then the one that the voters voted on
* Retrocession could be an option
* Maryland must consent for statehood
* There must be a Constitutional Amendment for statehood
 |
| 1993 | Advocates: *None*Opponents: *None* | Advocates:* Statehood would end the current unequal citizenship of D.C. residents.
* the democratic rights of 600,000 people have been taken away
* District residents have fought and died in war without representation
* Congress has abused the people of D.C.
* The District has suffered rank discrimination as the Nation’s Capital

Opponents:* The Federal Payment is unfair
 | Advocates:* The D.C. Statehood process went from Convention, to referendum, to legislation that was reviewed by the Statehood Compact Commission (Tennessee Plan)
* The Statehood Transition Committee helped make recommendations that would lead to a successful transition into a stat
* Outside of 23rd Amendment, the path to Statehood is clear

Opponents:* The updated constitution is an entirely new document then the one that the voters voted on
* There needs to be a Constitutional Amendment before Statehood
 |