

September 24, 2025

The Honorable Steve Scalise

Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune

Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries

Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Senator Chuck Schumer

Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Cc: Chairs and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Congressional Progressive Caucus, Congressional Community Safety Caucus, and Congressional Voting Rights Caucus

Dear Members of Congress:

We, the 151 undersigned national, state, and local organizations, ask you to pledge to protect the civil rights of District of Columbia residents, and the ability of D.C. to self-govern, by rejecting federal legislation that undermines its democratic institutions or revokes laws duly approved by D.C. voters or representatives.

Any attack on the District of Columbia's democratic institutions and right to self-governance is an attack on American democracy itself. The escalation of federal overreach into D.C. affairs – including the deployment of federal law enforcement and the National Guard – is a direct challenge to self-determination and representative democracy during President Trump's tenure. These actions make D.C. a testing ground for authoritarian tactics, designed to erode local control and normalize federal intervention that can and will be deployed in states and cities across the country.

When Congress allows D.C.'s autonomy to be undermined, it is not just D.C.'s values, families, union members, and locally-approved policies under attack. It is also an attack on American democracy and the fundamental principle of self-governance. D.C. is home to nearly 700,000 residents, more than the states of Wyoming and Vermont. D.C. is not just a jurisdiction filled with bureaucrats; D.C. is rich with culture and vibrant communities, including a population that is 44 percent Black.¹ D.C. remains uniquely vulnerable to Congressional and federal overreach. In these precarious times, we call on you to commit to voting against any legislation that overturns local laws or weakens D.C.'s ability to govern itself.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: District of Columbia,"
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/DC/PST045223>

Examples of recent attacks on Washington, D.C.'s right to self-governance include:

- President Trump's takeover of the Metropolitan Police Department and the influx of federal law enforcement racially profiling, harassing, arresting, detaining, and even transporting residents to facilities far from D.C.;²
- Congressional approval of a law forcing D.C. to cut its local budget by over \$1 billion;³ and,
- Introduction of bills in the U.S. Senate and House to repeal the Home Rule Act.⁴
- Consideration of federal legislation intended to undermine D.C.'s autonomy on issues such as sentencing, reentry, cash bail, pre-trial policies, and policing reform, a school voucher program, the criminalization of camping and therein homelessness, the nomination of D.C. judges and election of the D.C. Attorney General, among other concerning proposals.

We call on you to commit to the following: Out of respect for the autonomy of the District of Columbia, and in defense of American democracy, pledge to vote against any bill that undermines the democratic institutions of the District of Columbia or revokes its laws.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

1. Action Center on Race and the Economy
2. Alliance of Baptists
3. American Civil Liberties Union
4. American Friends Service Committee
5. Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
6. The Bail Project
7. Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
8. Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation
9. Black Voters Matter Fund
10. Care in Action
11. Center for Economic Democracy
12. Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

² Tracee Wilkins and Rick Yarborough, "'Like living in a dark room': Inside overcrowded ICE detention centers," *NBC4 Washington*, March 12, 2025, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/like-living-in-a-dark-room-inside-overcrowded-ice-detention-centers/3865502/>

³ Tazra Mitchell, "Congress Set to Force \$1 Billion in Spending Cuts for DC," *DC Fiscal Policy Institute* (blog), March 10, 2025, <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/congress-set-to-force-1-billion-in-spending-cuts-for-dc/>

⁴ ACLU of the District of Columbia, "Proposed Bill to Overturn D.C. Home Rule is a Direct Attack on American Democracy and States' Rights," *ACLU of DC* (press release), February 7, 2025, <https://www.acludc.org/en/press-releases/proposed-bill-overturn-dc-home-rule-direct-attack-american-democracy-and-states>

13. Center for Policing Equity
14. Coalition on Human Needs
15. Color Of Change
16. Community Change Action
17. DemCast USA
18. Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
19. Drug Policy Alliance
20. Faithful Democracy
21. Faith in Action
22. Family Values @ Work
23. Family Values @ Work Action
24. If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
25. Interfaith Action for Human Rights
26. Jobs With Justice
27. Just Future Project
28. Just Solutions
29. Justice Policy Institute
30. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
31. Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
32. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
33. League of Women Voters of the United States
34. MomsRising
35. NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
36. National Association of Social Workers
37. The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
(National CAPACD)
38. National Coalition for the Homeless
39. National Council of Churches
40. National Education Association
41. National Employment Law Project
42. National Health Law Program
43. National Homelessness Law Center
44. National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
45. National Women's Law Center Action Fund
46. NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
47. Popular Democracy
48. Positive Women's Network-USA
49. Pretrial Justice Institute
50. Public Justice

51. Reframe Health and Justice
52. The Religious Nationalisms Project—TRNP
53. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
54. Secure Elections Network
55. Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
56. Southern Poverty Law Center
57. Task Force for Democracy
58. T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
59. Uri L'Tzedek
60. Youth First Justice Collaborative

State/Local Organizations:

1. The 7 Collective
2. AAS EMPOWERMENT LLC
3. ACLU-DC
4. Action NC
5. Action Together NEPA
6. Alabama Arise
7. Arizona Jews for Justice
8. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
9. Arkansas Community Organizations
10. Ashbury UMC-DC
11. Ayuda
12. Baltimore - Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, Advocacy & Action Network
13. Chesapeake Climate Action Network
14. Chicago Jobs with Justice
15. Children's Law Center (DC)
16. Citizen Action of New York
17. Cleveland Jobs with Justice
18. Coalition for Economic Justice
19. Coalition for Justice at Georgetown Law
20. Colorado Fiscal Institute
21. Colorado Jobs with Justice
22. Common Good Iowa
23. The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
24. Community Labor United Inc.
25. Connecticut Voices for Children
26. DC Action

27. DC Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
28. DC Chapter - Center for Strong Public Schools Action Fund
29. D.C. Chapter, National Organization for Women
30. DC Democratic State Committee
31. DC Fiscal Policy Institute
32. DC for Democracy
33. DC Jobs With Justice
34. DC Justice Lab
35. DC Vote
36. Diverse City Fund
37. EmpowerEd
38. Fair Budget Coalition
39. Free DC
40. Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop
41. Florida Policy Institute
42. Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
43. Green New Deal for DC
44. Growing Pain Solutions
45. Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice, NFP
46. Indivisible Upper Cape
47. Jewish Community Action
48. Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
49. Jews United for Justice
50. Long Live GoGo
51. Maine People's Alliance
52. Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition
53. Maryland Center on Economic Policy
54. Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget)
55. Massachusetts Jobs With Justice
56. Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO
57. Meyer Foundation
58. Michigan League for Public Policy
59. Missouri Budget Project
60. Missouri Jobs with Justice
61. Montana Budget & Policy Center
62. More Than Our Crimes
63. Neighbors United for DC Statehood
64. Organized Power in Numbers
65. Our Revolution, Massachusetts

66. Pennsylvania Policy Center
67. People Power United
68. Policy Matters Ohio
69. Popular Democracy
70. Portland Jobs with Justice
71. Positive Force DC
72. Public Assets Institute
73. The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at the University of MD,
Baltimore
74. Return Strong
75. School Justice Project
76. Second Look Project
77. SEIU Local 500
78. Sincere Seven
79. SPACES In Action
80. Thrive Under 25
81. Toledo Area Jobs with Justice
82. Tzedek DC
83. UFCW 3000
84. Union for Reform Judaism
85. United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400
86. Voices for Utah children
87. Ward 3 Democratic Committee
88. Washington Defender Association
89. We Are Family Senior Outreach Network
90. West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
91. Win Without War