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1. D.C. has no voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and no representation at all in the Senate.

2. Our mayor has no authority over the D.C. National Guard.

3. National Guard units from other states can come into the city without the mayor's consent.

4. The president has the authority to federalize the Metropolitan Police Department.

5. Congress treated D.C. as a territory instead of a state in its \$2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, shorting the District about \$750 million in emergency funding.

6. D.C. residents have no say in presidential impeachments. Trump's second trial in the Senate relates to the Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, which directly impacted locals—including those who had to take shelter and respond to the rioting.

8. The D.C. Council has to hand deliver paper copies of all legislation the mayor signs to Congress for a 30-day review, or 60 days if it's criminal legislation. (Security fencing around the Capitol delayed the delivery of 60 bills.)

10. Congress can override D.C. legislation signed by the mayor during this review period, and has done so three times since 1975. One law overridden in 1981, the D.C. Sexual Assault Reform Act, aimed to modernize sexual assault laws and decriminalize homosexuality.

9. To bypass congressional review, the Council has to pass emergency legislation that only remains in effect for 90 days. (Roughly one-third of the bills lawmakers considered at the Feb. 2 legislative meeting were due to the congressional review layover.)

11. A century-old federal law restricts the height of D.C.'s buildings, so the Council alone cannot amend or repeal the Height Act. The last time Congress overrode a local bill signed by the mayor during the 30-day review period was in 1991, when the Council tried to exempt a portion of downtown from the Height Act.

12. D.C. cannot change the composition of its local government—expand the Council, for example—without Congress' consent.

14. The U.S. Parole Commission has no obligation to communicate with D.C. officials. It answers only to Congress.

16. D.C. cannot set aside local Medicaid dollars to pay for abortion services, as some states do.

13. D.C. runs the risk of being managed by a financial control board appointed by Congress that can override decisions made by the mayor and the Council. (Between 1995 and 2001, the Control Board had final say over the local budget and some legislation.) The same congressional legislation that created the Control Board also created the position of chief financial officer, who manages D.C.'s financial operations.

15. Unlike states, D.C. cannot make parole and supervised release determinations for residents convicted of a felony under D.C. law. The U.S. Parole Commission, a federal agency, makes these determinations.

17. D.C. can spend money approved in its annual budget, so long as Congress doesn't say no during a 30-day review period. Before the fiscal year 2017 budget, D.C. couldn't spend any local dollars until Congress approved the District budget alongside the federal one. (Congress has passed our appropriations on time only a handful of times since 1990.)

18. There are several hundred people convicted of D.C. Code offenses in federal prison whose most serious charge is violating the terms of their release. The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, a federal agency that does not answer to local officials, oversees residents on parole, probation, and supervised release.

19. Congress would not let D.C. know the results of a 1998 ballot initiative that sought to legalize medical marijuana for over a year. Thanks to an amendment from Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA), the D.C. Board of Elections could not count votes. A court decision released the results—the initiative was overwhelmingly favored by voters.

21. The U.S. Attorney for D.C., a federal appointee, prosecutes most violations of D.C. criminal law committed by adults, not the D.C. Attorney General, who residents elect.

22. Since D.C. no longer has a state prison, anyone convicted of a felony with a sentence of a year or more has to serve time in federal prison, sometimes hundreds of miles from home. This makes visits and accessing reentry programming more difficult. D.C. officials can't control services residents receive while incarcerated.

20. D.C. voters approved a ballot measure to legalize marijuana use in 2014. But since Congress has outlawed the recreational sale of marijuana in the years since, a black market has developed.

REASONS

23. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) tried to overrule the D.C. Human Rights Amendment Act, which repealed a congressionally imposed provision that allowed local schools to deny LGBTQ students equal access to facilities and services.

24. D.C. must wait on Congress to fill local judicial vacancies. Currently, there are nine vacancies in the Superior Court and two vacancies in the Court of Appeals. One seat has been vacant since November 2013.

25. The U.S. Attorney for D.C. is not subject to local oversight. Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney Jessie K. Liu prosecuted fewer hate crimes than any of her predecessors. She also refused to appear at an oversight hearing held by the Council, who could not compel her to testify.

27. Congress barred D.C. from using local funds for needle exchange programs between 1999 and 2007. After the ban was lifted, the number of newly diagnosed HIV cases attributed to injection drug use decreased by 99 percent.

29. The Council cannot adjust the filing limits in Small Claims Court, unlike legislatures in other states. Congress can and most recently did so in 2016, when it increased the maximum amount in controversy from \$5,000 to \$10,000; the court requested the change from Congress. There is no minimum filing limit for Small Claims Court.

26. While legislatures elsewhere can increase court fees, the Council cannot. It can't increase the \$15 eviction filing fee in Superior Court, the lowest in the country, even though lawmakers want to as a means to reduce the eviction filing rate.

28. Judges who hear local criminal and civil cases in D.C. Superior Court or the D.C. Court of Appeals are approved by the Senate, which D.C. residents have no voice in.

30. Rep. Tom Price (R-GA) attempted to bar the D.C. government from deducting union dues from employee paychecks.

31. The 23rd Amendment gave D.C. three votes in the Electoral College, but restricted the number of electors to that of the least populous state, not D.C.'s own population size. District residents cast their first presidential election votes in 1964.

33. The mayor has House floor privileges depending on which political party has control of the legislative body. Governors of the 50 states always have floor access.

36. D.C. exclusively relies on the federal government, by way of the U.S. Attorney's Office, to enforce local anti-corruption laws. The office has very rarely prosecuted these types of cases in recent years, focusing more on federal corruption.

32. The D.C. government allows incarcerated residents with a felony conviction to vote, but the Federal Bureau of Prisons was slow to share information about eligible voters with the District of Columbia Board of Elections so they could submit ballots in 2020.

34. Lobbyists who want to change D.C. law can visit Congress to do so. The nonwoven fabrics industry asked Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD) to overrule a Council bill that tried to regulate wet wipes because they clogged the sewer system.

35. D.C. misses out on \$2-\$3 billion in revenues annually because it can't tax the income of hundreds of thousands of nonresidents who work here, nor can it tax the property of the federal government.

IN SUPPORT OF

D.C.

37. Congress restricts two rainy-day funds called the Emergency Reserve and Contingency Reserve in such a way that makes them hard to use. While these reserves are required under federal law, the money is generated entirely from local taxes and fees.

38. Federal law requires the Council to adopt an annual budget within 70 calendar days of receiving the mayor's proposal. Local laws require two readings 14 days apart so the entire budget is put together in 56 days. (D.C. has a \$16 billion gross fund budget.)

39. All males over 18 in the D.C. have to register for Selective Service even though they are denied voting representation in Congress, where wars are supposed to be declared.

40. Our local budget cycle is tied to the federal fiscal year and begins on Oct. 1. As a result, the Council has to provide an advance to both DC Public Schools and charter schools to begin the school year, which starts roughly a month before the end of the previous fiscal year.

41. If D.C. had two senators, more federal lawmakers could advocate for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority funding. WMATA has a pandemic-induced \$171 million budget gap.

42. Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL) made several attempts to overturn a D.C. law that makes it illegal for local employers to discriminate against workers based on reproductive health decisions.

43. The Council cannot control the chief financial officer's salary; Congress does. The CFO makes \$253,300.00. For comparison, the chief of the Metropolitan Police Department makes \$282,716.46.

44. The Council offered government employees and their partners, regardless of sex or gender, access to health care and leave through the Health Benefits Expansion Act in 1992, but Congress refused to fund the measure until 2002.

45. D.C.'s federally operated courts undermine its sanctuary city status. The federal government funds the D.C. Superior Court, so security and support staff come from the U.S. Marshals Service, which automatically sends data on all "foreign-born detainees" to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

48. Only the president of the United States can grant clemency to offenders convicted under D.C.'s local laws. Governors of states can grant pardons. Only one D.C. Code offender—Alfred Mack, whose offense was unlawful distribution of heroin—has been granted clemency since 1989.

50. As recently as in 2017, Transportation Security Administration officers have sometimes refused to accept District licenses as a valid form of ID. Those agents charged with checking travelers' identification did not recognize what the "District of Columbia" is.

46. Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Rand Paul (R-KY) and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) separately introduced legislation to wipe out a lot of D.C.'s gun control laws.

47. Two of the D.C. Zoning Commission's five members have to be federal officials. The independent local agency is charged with preparing and amending zoning regulations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

49. The Commission of Fine Arts, a federal agency, reviews the development of District government buildings, as well as private development next to federal buildings and parks.

STATEHOOD

51. National activists' calls to "contact your representative" when Congress does not legislate, or does so poorly, do not work for the 712,816 residents who have no voting representation.

A list of reasons to immediately pass statehood legislation that readers can share with family or friends or lawmakers who stand in the way.

By Amanda Michelle Gomez
Design by Julia Terbrock

WASHINGTONIANS HAVE MANY reasons to be mad as hell about their lack of autonomy—former President Donald Trump's ability to deploy the city's own National Guard to suppress a crowd of peaceful protesters, over the objections of Mayor Muriel Bowser, is one that immediately comes to mind. But the fight for self-determination is not just motivated by the events of the past year, when the threat of Trump taking control of the D.C. police sometimes felt imminent.

D.C. residents have been denied equal political and economic rights from the very beginning. Unlike people living in 50 states, the more than 712,000 people living in D.C. do not have full voting representation in Congress, even though Congress directly oversees the District's local affairs. Congress can supersede the

authority of the mayor and the D.C. Council, lawmakers that only D.C. residents elect. The consequences of this setup are both obvious and insidious.

"There are two roads to equality, and we need to pursue them both at the same time," says Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton. "The way we deserve it is in one fell swoop with statehood. But in the meantime we are pursuing what amounts to the failure to give us full home rule [in 1973]."

With help from Norton's office, DC Vote, Neighbors United for DC Statehood, 51 for 51, the D.C. Council, the Office of the Attorney General, and Shadow Sen. Michael D. Brown, *City Paper* has compiled 51 reasons for making D.C. the 51st state as soon as possible.