

Fully Fund the Local Residents Voting Rights Act

Fair Budget Coalition in collaboration with Sunrise DC & Legal Aid DC

Recommendation

\$2.06 million to fully fund the Local Residents Voting Rights Bill

What's At Stake?

After decades without proper representation, DC residents know how crucial it is to have a voice in your community. This same principle applies to giving DC's undocumented residents voting rights in local elections. Undocumented residents face the brunt of every crisis, whether it's the COVID-19 pandemic, poor working conditions, or housing affordability. Their voices are often silenced because they are not citizens. As we seek to create a more equitable and inclusive DC, the voices of immigrants need to be heard.

What Is It?

The [Local Residents Voting Rights Act](#) is a bill introduced in 2021 by Councilmembers Nadeau, R. White, Allen, Lewis George, Silverman, Henderson, and Pinto to give all residents in DC voting rights in local elections including undocumented residents. The bill was passed almost unanimously by the DC Council in October 2022 and became law even in absence of the Mayor's signature.

What's Was the Hold Up?

The DC Home Rule Act requires Congress to review bills passed by the DC Council which include the Local Residents Voting Rights Act. The DC Home Rule Act established DC's governing structure in 1973, and because DC is still not a state, Congress can block bills from being law even if it goes against the voices of the DC Council and DC residents. In order for Congress to prevent this DC bill from becoming law, Congress must pass two disapproving resolutions. On February 9th, the House voted 260 to 162, to disprove the bill. The Senate had until March 14th to veto the bill. Because the Senate did not pass a disapproval resolution, the bill became DC law, successfully granting DC's undocumented residents the right to vote.

Citations

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- Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy. Tenants Without Rights: Situating the Experiences of New Immigrants in the U.S. Low-Income Housing Market, <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-journal/in-print/volume-28-issue-ii-winter-2021/tenants-without-rights-situating-the-experiences-of-new-immigrants-in-the-u-s-low-income-housing-market/>, 2021.
- The Washington Informer. The District's Home Rule History and Statehood Goal, <https://www.washingtoninformer.com/the-districts-home-rule-history-and-statehood-goal/>, 2020
- Mychael Schnell. House passes resolutions to block DC noncitizen voting bill, criminal code, <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/3852191-house-passes-resolutions-to-block-dc-noncitizen-voting-bill-criminal-code/>, 2022.

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