

ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST POLL: D.C. VOTE
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Six in 10 Americans Say Aye To a D.C. Vote in Congress

Six in 10 Americans favor voting rights in the U.S. House of Representatives for Washington, D.C. – an issue on the boil for decades, if not since the district’s creation 208 years ago, and now given its best-yet shot at clearing the Congress.

A Senate committee okayed the measure Feb. 11 and the full Senate – the bill’s toughest hurdle – has a procedural vote on the issue scheduled for today. If it flies in the Senate, a vote in the House – where it’s passed once before – could come in the next week or two.

Fifty-eight percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll support the notion, with 35 percent opposed. Support’s similar to what was in an ABC/Post poll in 2007, while opposition has inched up by 7 points, with fewer undecided.

There’s a partisan edge to these views, with support ranging from 67 percent among Democrats to 58 percent among independents and 50 percent among Republicans. There’s a gender gap, too – support is 11 points higher among women – and an age gap, with support highest (66 percent) among under 30s, lowest (49 percent) among seniors.

Support peaks among “strong” Democrats, at 74 percent, and liberal Democrats, at 73 percent; it bottoms out at 46 percent among conservative Republicans and likewise at 46 percent in another politically conservative group, evangelical white Protestants. There’s a 12-point gap between whites (55 percent support) and people in other racial groups (67 percent; they’re more likely to be Democrats).

Adding a voting representative from the district would almost certainly provide another vote for the Democrats in Congress, since three-quarters of the district’s voters are registered Democrats. The proposed legislation offers some balance by adding an additional House seat beyond one for D.C., to be apportioned to the state next in line for a seat based on population growth. At the outset that would be heavily Republican Utah.

But the legislation, if it passed, would be no sure bet, with a legal challenge virtually certain. Critics raise constitutional issues – the Constitution says House members are to be chosen by “the people of the several states,” and the district is not a state – and ask whether, if the district got a representative, two senators would follow.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 19-22, 2009, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults including both landline and cell phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3-point error

margin; click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Shannon N. Geis and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-25 previously released.

26-41 held for release.

42. On another subject: as you may know, Washington, D.C. has a delegate in Congress, but that person is not allowed to vote on laws. Would you support or oppose new legislation giving D.C. a full voting member in the U.S. House of Representatives?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
2/22/09	58	35	7
4/22/07	61	28	11

END