

# DC Vote Voice

SPRING 2005  
www.dcvote.org

## Poll Shows Nationwide Support for DC Voting Rights

In January of 2005, DC Vote released a nationwide poll showing that four out of five Americans (82 percent) support congressional voting representation for the residents of DC.

The national poll of 1,007 people found that a majority of respondents were unaware of DC's denial of democracy. Again, about four out of five Americans (78 percent) thought that DC residents have voting rights in Congress equal to those of their fellow Americans.

The poll "certainly gives us a sense of the awareness, or lack thereof, outside the DC area and reinforces what we all know in our guts, which is, once people know about DC's status, they support full voting representation for the District," said Ilir Zherka, executive director of DC Vote.

The poll was conducted by KRC Research, a nonpartisan opinion research firm, from January 14 to 16 and has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The polling data showed strong support across age groups, gender, and political party affiliations. Support in the poll cut across party lines with 87 percent of Democrats and 77 percent of Republicans supporting full representation.

The DC Vote poll also showed that people who have visited DC, or know a friend or family member in DC, are among the most likely to be aware of the lack of voting representation for DC residents. Among those who have visited the DC area, 35 percent are aware that DC residents lack voting representation in Congress, which is double the national average. Thirty-three percent of Americans who have visited DC are aware of the "Taxation Without Representation" license plate.

"The success of DC's 'Taxation Without Representation' license plate and awareness campaign shows that a simple message, propelled by word of mouth advertising, is really effective at educating Americans," said Zherka. "Enlisting DC's large community of nonprofit organizations and foundations to help spread our message will add even more momentum to this issue at a time of real progress and hope."

Thirteen percent of those surveyed said DC should not have full voting rights, and five percent said they did not know. Of those who opposed equal voting rights, 28 percent favored granting the District at least a vote in the House.



DC Young Suffragists Ask Senator Kennedy and Others to 'Be Mine' on Valentine's Day



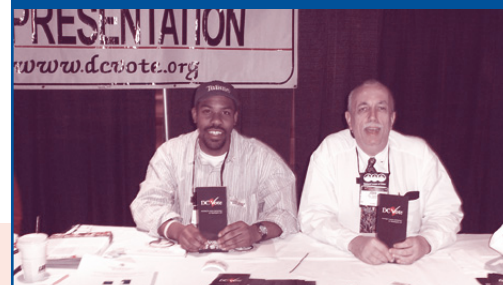
DC Vote Joined Lowell School Students for Their Annual 'Taxation Without Representation' Tea Party



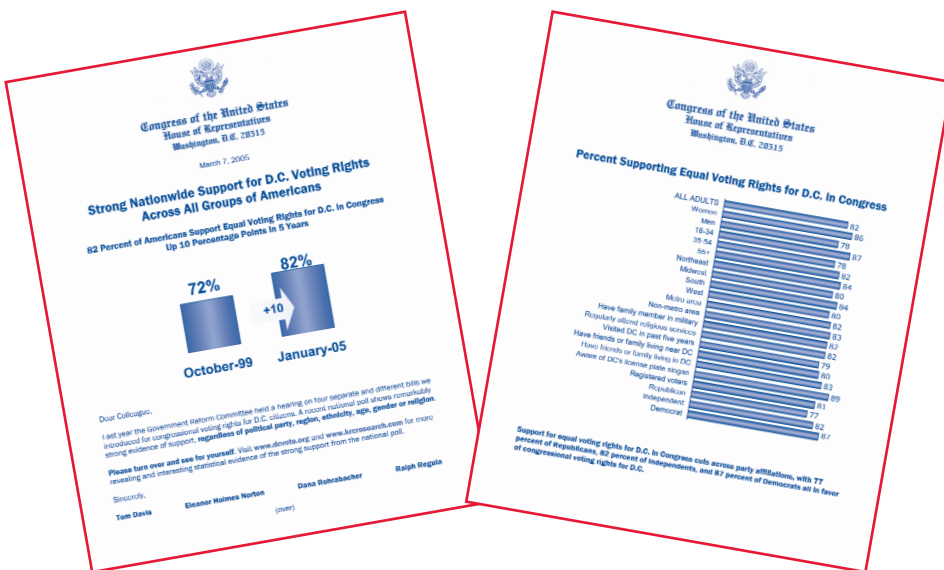
Ilir Zherka Joins Sen. Lieberman and Del. Norton Introducing the 'No Taxation Without Representation Act'



The Rock Group 'Betty' Held a Benefit Concert of Their Show 'Betty Rules' for DC Vote in March



Volunteers Recruit New Supporters at the National League of Cities Conference



The above 'Dear Colleague' letter was sent by Reps. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Tom Davis (R-VA), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) and Ralph Regula (R-OH) to fellow members of Congress on March 7, 2005.

## DC Vote Meets with House and Senate Staffers

On February 25 and on March 11, DC Vote furthered its mission to educate Congress by hosting two luncheon meetings with congressional staff. Speaking about the history and the current status of the DC voting rights movement, Ilir Zherka explained the role Congress must play to bring democracy to the nation's capital.

"These luncheons gave DC Vote a great opportunity to carry our message to the Congress," Zherka said. "Creating relationships with decision-makers and their staff is the best way to take the movement for DC voting rights to the next level."

Building off of new momentum in Congress and in the media, DC Vote plans to launch its "Adopt-a-Member-of-Congress" program this summer. With this program, DC Vote will give volunteers and supporters opportunities to get more involved in the movement to bring democracy to America's capital. Dedicated DC Vote advocates will create working relationships with targeted members of Congress to take action on our issue. Look for more information on this program soon.

## National League of Cities Gives Focus to DC Voting Rights at Conference

The National League of Cities (NLC), a DC Vote coalition member, highlighted DC Vote and DC voting rights issues at their Congressional City Conference in Washington, DC, held March 11 through March 15, 2005.

Highlighting the movement, DC Mayor and NLC Chair Anthony Williams spoke at length about the issue and invited DC Vote to pass out educational and informational materials. In December 2004, the NLC passed a resolution supporting voting rights for DC in Congress.

"Here in Washington, DC, our soldiers can fight and die in wars, "but they do not have a single vote in Congress to represent their views," Williams said. "Our residents pay some of the highest taxes in the nation, but they do not have a single vote in Congress. I urge all of you to consider this policy and adopt a resolution in your own cities and towns in support of this fundamental right."

## Sen. Lieberman and Rep. Norton Introduce 'No Taxation Without Representation Act'

Ilir Zherka joined Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT); Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC); Emory Kosh, a DC veteran; and Andy Shallal, an Iraqi-born DC businessman to introduce the 'No Taxation Without Representation Act of 2005' on Thursday, January 27, 2005.

The bills, S. 195 and H.R. 398, would provide the District with full congressional voting representation: one representative and two senators.

Senator Lieberman announced his plans to build bipartisan support for the legislation.

"We will continue to seek Republican support for this measure," Lieberman said. "This ought to be totally nonpartisan."

Andy Shallal called it ironic that he could vote in Iraq's January elections, while District of Columbia veterans of the war in Iraq still cannot elect a voting representative to Congress.

"I was particularly moved to speak up when I heard the three soldiers from this city stepped forward and asked the Congress for the same voting rights here that their service will bring to Iraqis on January 30th," Shallal said. Veteran Kosh hugged Shallal as they thanked each other.

### DC Vote Membership

With all of the current activity taking place on Capitol Hill on our issue, and with all of the educational and advocacy activities DC Vote has planned to keep the momentum going strong, we need your help more than ever. We ask that you join us by making a tax-deductible contribution to DC Vote today by using the enclosed envelope or by visiting our website at [www.dcvote.org](http://www.dcvote.org). Any donation of \$20 and more will make you a member of DC Vote, and every dollar helps us spread the message of DC's denial of equal rights to more and more people.

## Washington Nationals' Name Reflects New Effort for DC Voting Rights

Baseball is back in Washington, DC, after a 34 year hiatus. While many fans know the new team is called the Washington Nationals, few people outside of the District know the significance of the team's new name.

This new name is no accident. The decision to name the team the 'Nationals' instead of the 'Senators,' DC's former baseball team, stems from the District's more than 200 year history of being denied voting rights in Congress.

"We don't have senators here," said DC Mayor Anthony Williams in October of 2004. "Give us two senators, and I'll be happy to call them [the baseball team] the 'Senators.'"

The change in the team name reflects a shift in the way people think about DC and its nearly 600,000 residents. A recent national

poll showed that 82 percent of Americans believe DC residents should have equal voting rights in Congress.

"Democracy is a birthright for all Americans, including those in DC," said Ilir Zherka. "It's time to let DC vote in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House."

In March, the U.S. House Committee on Government Reform heard testimony from subpoenaed baseball players on the topic of steroid use in the sport.

"Clearly, members of Congress and their staff have an interest in baseball," Zherka said. "We're trying to connect America's pastime with American democracy. What's more symbolic of America than voting and baseball?"



Panelists Discuss Future Activities at the DC Voting Rights Summit



Rep. Tom Davis Gives His Support for DC Representation in Congress



Hundreds Attended January's DC Voting Rights Summit

## DC Voting Rights Supporters Look Ahead at Summit

On January 25, 2005, over 125 leaders from the nonprofit, philanthropic, business, and labor communities joined U.S. Representative Tom Davis (R-VA), Chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, and DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) for the DC Voting Rights Summit. Participants discussed the state of the voting rights movement and the impact of DC's denial of congressional voting representation on such critical issues as public health, gun safety, business investment, and the environment. Tom Sherwood of NBC4 moderated a panel discussion. The panelists included:

- **Donald Borut**, Executive Director, National League of Cities
- **Terri Lee Freeman**, President, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
- **Jatrice Martel Gaiter**, President & CEO, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington DC, Inc.
- **Ted Trabue**, Regional Vice President, PEPCO
- **Jan Verhage**, Executive Director, Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital
- **Jos Williams**, President, Metro Washington Council, AFL-CIO

"We know that education is the surest way to increase support for equal voting rights for DC citizens," said Ilir Zherka. "The involvement of the nonprofit community in reaching out to the community, not just in the DC area, but across the nation, will have a dramatic effect in making our country aware of DC's status."

Also at the forum, DC Vote released important new data from a national poll showing widespread support for equal voting rights for DC citizens.

DC Vote would like to sincerely thank the following organizations for sponsoring the DC Voting Rights Summit and for their efforts in the DC Voting Rights Movement:

- **Community Foundation for the National Capital Region**
- **Consumer Health Foundation**
- **Meyer Foundation**
- **Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation**
- **Public Welfare Foundation**
- **Trellis Fund**

## Opening Day Tickets Boost Membership

DC Vote gave away two opening day Washington Nationals tickets during a membership drive in April. The drive brought hundreds of new donors and engaged many current members in their support of DC Vote. DC Vote plans on using other creative ideas for upcoming membership drives.

"We thank and congratulate Jamal Jafari as the winning DC Vote member of the ticket giveaway," said Ilir Zherka. "This membership drive has strengthened our base of supporters, and displays momentum to bring American democracy to America's capital."

DC Vote thanks all our members nationwide for their overwhelming support for this membership drive and their continuing dedication to our mission.



Raising awareness and cheering on the Nats at home opener, this 20'x10' banner featuring DC Vote hangs outside RFK stadium and was mentioned in dozens of media stories across the country.



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## DC Vote and DCTV Partner on “Democracy Day”

On Saturday, February 5th, 2005, DC Vote joined DCTV to host “Democracy Day” as an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to create public service announcements advocating for DC voting rights.

Six organizations joined DC Vote at the event: the **DC Young Suffragists**, the **League of Women Voters of DC**, the local **NAACP Vets Group**, the **Central American Resource Center**, the **Washington Area Urban League**, and the **DC Area NAACP**. DC Vote and each organization recorded 60-second segments highlighting their contributions to the DC voting rights movement.

“Democracy Day was an outstanding opportunity for voting rights organizations to get their messages out to the DC community,” Shawn Rolland, program assistant at DC Vote who coordinated Democracy Day. “We’re always looking for innovative ways like this to inform and engage the community.”

The announcements from all of the organizations will air throughout the year at various times on DC’s public access channels: Comcast channels 5 and 6, and Starpower/RCN channels 10 and 11.

## New Names and Faces

DC Vote would like to welcome its two newest staff members: **Zainab Akbar** and **Shawn Rolland**.

Zainab works as a Program Assistant in Outreach. Already, she has helped DC Vote build and create new relationships with people on Capitol Hill and in the greater community. Zainab joined DC Vote because she is dedicated to achieving full political and social enfranchisement for women, minorities and immigrant communities in the U.S.

Shawn works as a Program Assistant in Communications. His background in public relations and politics has allowed him to contribute to DC Vote’s strategic communication’s plan, develop the organization’s award-winning website and database, and maintain positive relationships with the media.

## Special Thanks

DC Vote gives special thanks to **Kelly/Editors Press** and **Signs by Tomorrow** for their kind considerations and dedicated work on DC Vote’s publications and displays.

Use the enclosed envelope or visit our website today at [www.dcvote.org](http://www.dcvote.org) to make a contribution to DC Vote.

DC Vote is a 501 (c) (3) educational and advocacy organization whose mission is to secure full voting representation in Congress for the residents of the District of Columbia.