To: FMW Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business

From: Susan Meehan, FMW Rep. to the Council of Churches of Greater Washington (CofCGW)

Subject: Request for approval of

* Support of Statehood efforts by CofCGW
* Letter to The General Committee of FCNL, which will be meeting in DC November 14 – 17, stating our support for DC Statehood and asking for it to be approved as one of FCNL’s Ten Year List of Priorities

I have the honor of being FMW Representative to the Council of Churches of Greater Washington (CofCGW). There, I serve as Vice President for program on the Council, and am in charge of its annual Fall Assembly. Each Assembly has a theme, and I have chosen this years to be

"SUPPORTING STATEHOOD FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA -

WHY IT IS OWED TO US -and HOW HOUSES OF WORSHIP CAN ASSIST IN THIS PROCESS."

It is in support of this theme that I am writing Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. I would like to ask the November Business Meeting to support this issue, to take part in CofCGW’s efforts to this end, and to send the attached letter to this effect to the members of the General Committee of the Friends Committee on National Legislation urging it to include DC statehood at its November 14-17th Meeting to set its 10-year priorities.

Background

How could the needs of our citizenry, most especially including those of our poor and underserved be best served? Statehood is the most substantial and most customary way of approaching this problem. What are its advantages?

* In the United States, only by becoming a state does representation and local control come about that cannot, by vote of the US Congress, be rescinded. Any other representation form can be withdrawn, including voting  representation. Statehood would settle the issue once and forever, and it is the method outlined in our Constitution.
* To be constitutionally a full citizen of the United States requires the American to be a citizen of a state.  The state is our fundamental building block. The opening sentence of our Constitution makes this clear.  "We the People of the United States" are its opening words.  Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution follows this line of reasoning when it says, "The Citizens of each state shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States."

How does lack of representation affect DC, and especially its poor?

It has become evident that the recent sequestration and federal governmental shutdown affected the District in ways that have not occurred in states. Congress can decide how DC's own tax money will be spent, with no necessity of to regard our own budgetary choices.   And the repercussive effects of sequestration and governmental shutdown have affected the poor of the District even more heavily than the poor living in states.  Our poor suffer even more heavily - for example, the number of people applying for unemployment compensation in the course of the last week before the shutdown ended showed a huge increase - over 37,000 residents applied for assistance - the biggest increase ever recorded here. Our charities are truly strained.

Where is the Consent of the Governed in our case?

But more profound yet is the cry for equality by residents of the District. They call into question the grand words of our Declaration of Independence - when applied to DC residents.  "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness....That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

What can be done?

To help provide guidance to District residents in how the full measure of equality can be sought through statehood, the Council of Churches of Greater Washington will reach out to denominational bodies, such as the Friends Committee for National Legislation, as well as individual houses of worship throughout the metropolitan area, to help develop effective lobbying techniques in persuading Congress to support the establishment of the State of New Columbia.  FMW support would be an important step in this direction.

If our Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business agrees with this request, we would send the attached letter of support forthwith to the FCNL General Meeting, to be held in Washington November 14-16, asking that support of DC statehood be included in the FCNL Ten Year List of National Priorities.

As Way Opens –

Susan Meehan

(FMW Member since 1967)

PS Attached is a recent editorial on this subject by the Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-district-gains-control-of-the-purse-for-now/2013/10/19/77fbf98a-3831-11e3-80c6-7e6dd8d22d8f_story.html>

**The Post’s View**

**The District gains control of the purse, for now**

But the District still needs a permanent fix for its spending authority

By [Editorial Board](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-posts-view/2011/12/07/gIQAoEIscO_page.html), Published: October 19 [October 20 in print edition]

SUCH IS THE second-class status of D.C. residents that it is considered a big victory that the District will be able to spend its local tax dollars [through next September](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-is-poised-to-win-yearlong-spending-authority-in-capitol-hill-shutdown-deal/2013/10/16/5ddbde2e-369e-11e3-80c6-7e6dd8d22d8f_story.html).

Don’t get us wrong: we understand the importance of the city being immunized from the threat of another federal government shutdown. We applaud the tenacity of local officials who successfully pled the District’s case. But it is maddening that the nation’s capital must get on bended knee for a basic right — expenditure of its own tax dollars — that it is taken for granted by every state and locality in the nation.

Legislation approved this week by Congress and signed by President Obama to raise the debt ceiling and reopen the federal government contains a provision that allows D.C. to spend its own local funds regardless of possible future federal shutdowns during the 2014 fiscal year. Because its budget is tied to the federal appropriations process, the city becomes vulnerable when Congress is — as just occurred — at an impasse.

The D.C. measure, included in the bipartisan agreement brokered by Senate leaders, was hailed as a “historic first” by D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) who, along with Mayor Vincent C. Gray (D), gave heightened visibility to the city’s plight by challenging Democratic opposition to uncoupling the city from the federal shutdown. Ms. Norton [pointedly questioned Mr. Obama](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2013/10/09/eleanor-holmes-norton-confronts-obama-on-d-c-budget-bill/) while [Mr. Gray confronted Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-mayor-gray-confronts-reid-on-capitol-steps-over-shutdowns-impact-on-city/2013/10/09/02577428-3103-11e3-89ae-16e186e117d8_story.html) (D-Nev.)

It’s good that their efforts paid off, but the measure approved last week doesn’t go far enough. It doesn’t give the city lasting authority over the right to spend the roughly $6 billion it raises each year in local funds or to choose when its budget year should start.

A measure amending the city’s charter to allow local officials to spend these funds without a congressional appropriation was approved by voters this year but its legality has been questioned. It’s unclear what will happen when it goes into effect in January.