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Dear Senator:

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On behalf of the American Bar Association, I urge you to support the enactment of S. 1257, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act. The ABA, which supports full voting representation in Congress for the District of Columbia, believes that S.1257 will achieve an important part of that goal.

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S. 1257 would establish the District of Columbia as a congressional district for purposes of representation in the House of Representatives. This bill is a product of years of cooperative effort and carefully considered compromise to ensure that the goal of giving D.C. residents their right to voting representation in the House is accomplished by a mechanism fully consistent with our Constitution and is implemented in a manner that does not disadvantage any citizen or state.

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S. 1257 has broad, bipartisan support and was approved by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee by a vote of 9-1 on June 13, 2007. In addition, similar legislation was passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year. Most importantly, as recent polls have shown, a substantial majority of Americans throughout the country support congressional voting rights for D.C. residents.

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Moreover, Congress has the constitutional authority to provide voting representation in the House of Representatives to residents of the District of Columbia. Such authority is granted by the "District Clause" of the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 17, which confers upon the Congress the power "[t]o exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District. . . ." Numerous legal and constitutional experts have expressed agreement on this issue and have noted that the courts have never struck down a congressional exercise of the District clause.

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It is time for Congress to exercise its constitutional authority to correct the longstanding disenfranchisement of the citizens of the District of Columbia. I urge you to vote in favor of cloture and final passage of S. 1257.

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Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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Sincerely,



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