

Eleanor Holmes Norton answers to DC4D questionnaire

1. What motivates you to seek the position of Delegate, or to seek re-election?

Despite the current do-nothing Congress, I am encouraged by being able to continue to produce for the District. Among the most recent examples are home rule advances, including getting my budget and legislative autonomy and permanent anti D.C. shut down bills in this year's Senate appropriations bill, getting both the House and the Senate to put my anti-shutdown bill in the appropriations bill for two years, and getting the House ban on D.C.'s gun and marijuana decriminalization laws removed. I continue to be able to use not only legislation, but also my seniority and committee work to bring home jobs for residents (new construction funds at St. Elizabeth's in ward 8, to house the Department of Homeland Security top brass, including the Secretary, assuring the completion of the DHS complex, as well as construction at the Old Post Office, bringing millions in new tax revenue from the city's first luxury hotel, and at the SE and SW waterfronts).

2. What are your qualifications to serve as Delegate?

Because of my long service in the Congress, I must be judged by my record. During most of my service, I have served in the minority in an increasingly far right Congress, but I got more bills passed in this Congress than any Democrat. See answers to question 1 and 3 for examples of my record.

3. What have you done to advocate for statehood for the people of the District of Columbia?

Most recently, working closely with Senator Tom Carper, I was able to get the first ever Senate D.C. statehood hearing. I also asked and got President Obama to endorse statehood, and Majority Leader Harry Reid and the entire Democratic Senate Leadership to co-sponsor the bill, as well as the largest number of House and Senate co-sponsors ever to co-sponsor a D.C. statehood bill.

4. What should be the focus of the movement for DC rights? Why?

The focus of the movement for DC rights should be to build on the momentum from the huge crowd that attended the Senate statehood hearing, the largest to attend any DC hearing. The crowd should be understood as a potential expanded statehood movement. We must use this moment of demonstrated excitement for statehood to build a larger statehood movement in the city, the country, and the Congress so that we can move our statehood bill to the Senate floor.

5. What can and should the Delegate do to promote full citizenship rights for the people of the District of Columbia?

Although House ethics rules prevent lobbying led by Members, the delegate is essential to promoting and obtaining full citizenship rights. For example, I asked Senator Carper to hold the statehood hearing, and I suggested some of the witness. Moreover, most Members of the House and Senate, will not co-sponsor bills concerning the Member's district without the urging or permission of the Member involved. More important, the Delegate is in a unique position to promote statehood with the general public by making statehood a major feature of her work in Congress, such as using my frequent floor speeches, major media like Stephen Colbert as well as social media, and continuing to build much needed activism in the city itself among our own residents.

6. Including but not limited to the role of the Delegate, what strategy would you recommend to move the District forward in the fight for statehood?

Even a receptive Congress will not move on statehood until there is steady, not merely an episodic, support by residents and until they hear from their own constituents. The increasing number of active organizations and citizens in the statehood coalition show a growing potential infrastructure of support for the statehood movement, and the District of Columbia government and residents have the skills and resources to systematically communicate to the country on paid and social media and on line. The out pouring of residents to the statehood hearing offers a new opportunity for leadership to put together a strong local and national statehood infrastructure. Even without immediate resources, the statehood coalition has the expertise to lead a sustained, coordinated social media strategy to

inform the country of the District's disempowered status, that statehood is the only remedy that guarantees full equality, and that Americans should lobby their own Members of the House and Senate to remedy this unique injustice.

7. Recognizing the necessity that the Delegate must work with the Mayor and Council on a broad range of matters pertaining to our relationship with the federal government, to what extent can or should the independently elected Delegate to Congress nevertheless speak out on issues of public policy confronting the people of the District?

Like other Members of Congress, the Delegate owes a responsibility to follow the wishes of her constituents on most matters as expressed through legislation, and it is rare of that her views would not coincide with opinions in the District. However, she is like other Members of Congress in being active and speaking out on national policy, which often has profound local effects. Further, as a Member of Congress, she has access to information, and knowledge about D.C. that her constituents and city officials may lack, and she owes a duty of transparency concerning such information. A recent example was the budget autonomy referendum, which I strongly supported, while nevertheless, informing residents that the Congressional Research Service and lawyers in the House had raised legal questions about its legality. Although constituents need full information, when it comes to their rights, such as budget autonomy, I do not believe residents should hesitate to vote for a referendum concerning their rights.