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ISSUE UPDATE

DATE: September 20, 2007
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director,
NAACP Washington Bureau

NAACP–Supported D.C. Voting Rights Bill Fails in Senate

*Key Civil Rights Legislation Passed House in April
Senate Vote Falls 3 Short of 60 Needed to Move Bill Forward*

THE ISSUE:

On September 18, 2007, the United States Senate voted on whether or not to invoke cloture, or end debate, on S. 1257, the *District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007*, legislation allowing the residents of the District of Columbia to have a voting member of the US House of Representatives. While a majority of the Senators (57 out of 100) did vote in support of the bill, unfortunately 60 Senators are needed to invoke cloture and avoid a filibuster. This means that supporters of the legislation must now go back and try to convince at least 3 Senators to change their vote and allow the DC Voting Rights bill to move forward.

Despite the fact that they pay federal taxes, serve on juries and defend our Nation in times of war like most other Americans, the residents of the District of Columbia are barred from having voting representation on the floor of the U.S. House or Senate. This classic example of “taxation without representation” is contrary to everything that this nation is founded on. More than half a million people, over 57% of whom are African American (with Caucasians making up just over 30% of the population and 8.5% of the residents claiming Hispanic background), are paying money to and dying for a government in which they have no say. It also means that the federal government is receiving and spending \$4 billion in taxes paid without having to account for it. In fact, the residents of the District of Columbia pay more federal taxes per capita than all but one other state.

In a key civil rights victory, on April 19, 2007 the US House of Representatives passed, by a bipartisan margin of 241 yeas to 177 nays, H.R. 1905, the *District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act*. The NAACP strongly supports this legislation as a good first step toward the goal of full voting representation in Congress for DC residents. H.R. 1905 would add two voting members to the US House of Representatives – one to represent Washington, DC and one to represent Utah (Utah narrowly lost getting an additional congressional seat after the last US Census in 2000; officials in Utah believe that thousands of missionaries living abroad were unfairly excluded during the Census count, which would have given them an additional seat.) This bill addresses the Utah concern and provides a “vote neutral” option by adding two additional seats to be represented by a Democrat and a Republican.

SEE HOW YOUR SENATORS VOTED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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VOTING RIGHTS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

S. 1257 / District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007 /Cloture / Roll Call Vote # 339

Vote to invoke cloture, or end debate and proceed with final consideration of legislation giving full voting rights in the US House of Representatives to the people of the District of Columbia. 3/5 (or 60) of the Senate membership is necessary to support cloture for a vote to be successful. Thus the motion for cloture failed on September 18, 2006, by a vote of 57 yeas to 42 nays.

THE NAACP SUPPORTED THE MOTION TO INVOKE CLOTURE.

ALABAMA

Shelby ▽
Sessions ▽

ALASKA

Stevens ▽
Murkowski, L. ▽

ARIZONA

McCain ▽
Kyl ▽

ARKANSAS

Lincoln ▲
Pryor ▲

CALIFORNIA

Feinstein ▲
Boxer ▲

COLORADO

Allard ▽
Salazar, Ken ▲

CONNECTICUT

Dodd ▲
Lieberman ▲

DELAWARE

Biden ▲
Carper ▲

FLORIDA

Nelson, Bill ▲
Martinez ▽

GEORGIA

Chambliss ▽
Isakson ▽

HAWAII

Inouye ▲
Akaka ▲

IDAHO

Craig ▽
Crapo ▽

ILLINOIS

Durbin ▲
Obama ▲

INDIANA

Lugar ▲
Bayh ▲

IOWA

Grassley ▽
Harkin ▲

KANSAS

Brownback ▽
Roberts ▽

KENTUCKY

McConnell ▽
Bunning ▽

LOUISIANA

Landrieu ▲
Vitter ▽

MAINE

Snowe ▲
Collins ▲

MARYLAND

Mikulski ▲
Cardin ▲

MASSACHUSETTS

Kennedy ▲
Kerry, John ▲

MICHIGAN

Levin, Carl ▲
Stabenow ▲

MINNESOTA

Coleman ▲
Klobuchar ▲

MISSISSIPPI

Cochran ▽
Lott ▽

MISSOURI

Bond ▽
McCaskill ▲

MONTANA

Baucus ▽
Tester ▲

NEBRASKA

Hagel ▽
Nelson, Ben ▲

NEVADA

Reid, Harry ▲
Ensign ▽

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Gregg ▽
Sununu ▽

NEW JERSEY

Lautenberg ▲
Menendez ▲

NEW MEXICO

Domenici ▽
Bingaman ▲

NEW YORK

Schumer ▲
Clinton ▲

NORTH CAROLINA

Dole ▽
Burr ▽

NORTH DAKOTA

Conrad ▲
Dorgan ▲

OHIO

Voinovich ▲
Brown ▲

OKLAHOMA

Inhofe ▽
Coburn ▽

OREGON

Wyden ▲
Smith, Gordon ▽

PENNSYLVANIA

Specter ▲
Casey ▲

RHODE ISLAND

Reed, Jack ▲
Whitehouse ▲

SOUTH CAROLINA

Graham ▽
DeMint ▽

SOUTH DAKOTA

Johnson ▲
Thune ▽

TENNESSEE

Alexander ▽
Corker ▽

TEXAS

Hutchison ▽
Cornyn ▽

UTAH

Hatch ▲
Bennett ▲

VERMONT

Leahy ▲
Sanders ▲

VIRGINIA

Warner ▽
Webb ▲

WASHINGTON

Murray ▲
Cantwell ▲

WEST VIRGINIA

Byrd ?
Rockefeller ▲

WISCONSIN

Kohl ▲
Feingold ▲

WYOMING

Enzi ▽
Barrasso ▽

VOTE KEY

▽ = Voted against cloture and against the NAACP position

▲ = Voted in support of cloture and in support of the NAACP position

? = Did not Vote