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ELECTIONS FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVE

The offices of two United States Senators and one United States Representative were created by the "District of Columbia Statehood Constitutional Convention Initiative" which was approved by D.C. voters in 1980. This initiative measure also called for a convention to draft a constitution for the proposed state of New Columbia.

The two Senators and one Representative are local D.C. offices which have the same titles as the federal offices that will exist if the District becomes a state. Elections for these positions were postponed by legislation several times, with the first elections held in the Fall of 1990.

The idea of electing "Senators" and "Representatives" as part of an effort to achieve statehood originated in the "Tennessee Plan" of 1796. Since then, seven states--Tennessee, Michigan, Iowa, California, Oregon, Kansas, and Alaska--have used the procedure in the course of gaining admission to the Union.

DUTIES

Under the Initiative and later amendments, the duties of the Senators and Representative are:

1. To inform Congress that D.C. residents meet the traditional standards for achieving statehood;
2. To monitor the progress of the District's petition to gain statehood; and
3. To advise the District of Columbia on public policy matters that bear on achieving statehood.

SALARIES AND FUNDING

Salaries and expenses for these officials do not come from the D.C. budget. The Senators and Representative may raise funds from private sources to cover their expenses.

TERMS OF OFFICE

District law sets the term of office for the Representative at two years and the term for the Senators at six years. The terms for the two Senators are staggered.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

These offices are defined as partisan, which means that a primary is held to nominate candidates from the major political parties (Democratic, Republican, D.C. Statehood, and Umoja) to the general election ballot. In the general election, each party nominee will appear on the ballot, along with any independent and minor party candidates who qualify for the ballot directly by obtaining the required number of voter signatures on a nominating petition.

The filing deadlines and signature requirements for candidates running for Senator or Representative are the same as those for candidates for other citywide offices--such as Delegate to the House, Mayor, Council Chairman, and At-Large Member of the Council.

To appear on the ballot in a primary election, a candidate for Senator or Representative must collect the signatures of one percent of the voters registered within his or her party, or 2,000 signatures whichever is less. To appear on the ballot in the General Election (as an independent or minor party candidate), the candidate must collect signatures of 3,000 registered voters.

QUALIFICATIONS

To hold the office of United States Senator, an individual must meet the following qualifications, as defined in the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 1).

1. Be at least 30 years of age.
2. Have been a U.S. citizen for at least nine years.
3. Be a resident of the District of Columbia on the date of the general or special election.

To hold the office of United States Representative, an individual must meet the following qualifications, as defined in the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 2):

1. Be at least 25 years of age.
2. Have been a U.S. citizen for at least seven years.
3. Be a resident of the District of Columbia on the date of the general or special election.