

NEW COLUMBIA STATEHOOD COMMISSION MEETING

October 27, 2025 at 3:00pm
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW
room 527 Washington, DC

Attendees: Members of the Commission

- Mayor Muriel Bowser
 - DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson
 - Senator Paul Strauss
 - Representative Oye Owolewa
 - Senator Ankit Jain
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- Mayor Muriel Bowser called the meeting to order at 3:09PM, acknowledged a quorum, and opened with remarks on protecting DC home rule and the need for full representation. Mayor Bowser emphasized DC achievements (growth, education, crime reduction, strong credit ratings) and reiterated the need for full representation/statehood.
 - At 3:15PM Senator Strauss: thanked commissioners, noted increased urgency for statehood, welcomed new senator, and moved consideration of a draft FY2026 spending plan.
 - At 3:19PM Representative Owolewa described impacts of lack of statehood (budget cuts, autonomy limits), thanked leaders for preserving delegation budget, urged increased resources.
 - Senator Jain introduced himself, thanked staff/interns, highlighted delegation successes in outreach and co-sponsors, called for appropriate funding and presented an amendment/substitute budget proposal at 3:22PM.
 - At 3:26PM Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson provided opening remarks and reviewed commission structure and need for a coherent, long-term plan for statehood; framed today’s primary business as FY2026 budget approval.
 - At 3:30PM Senator Paul Strauss presented the spending plan which is a resolution of the commission that allocates the budget. Senator highlighted that this spending plan for statehood initiatives under the jurisdiction of the new Columbia State Commission is a total of \$267,000, which includes personnel services for the Office of State and delegation and the amount of 162,000 and an aggregate amount of non-personnel surpluses of 105,000 are stated initiatives as approved by this commission. Senator Strauss motioned the plan for discussion and consideration at 3:34PM.

701200C – CONTINUING FULL TIME – OTHERS	\$140,00
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701400C – FRINGE BENEFITS - CURRENT PERSONNEL	\$22,000
SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES (PS)	\$162,000
711100C – SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	\$6,000
713100C – OTHER SERVICES AND CHARGES	\$99,000
713200C – CONTRACTUAL SERVICES-Other	\$0
717100C – PURCHASES EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY	\$0
SUBTOTAL NONPERSONAL SERVICES (NPS)	\$105,000
GROSS FUNDS	\$267,000

STATEHOOD INITIATIVES FY' 2026

STATEHOOD INITIATIVES	Dollar Amount FY 2026
51 STARS PROGRAM	\$20,000
TARGETED STATES OUTREACH + TRAVEL	\$13,700
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION EFFORTS + TRAVEL	\$15,000
DELEGATION WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND EMAIL SERVICES	\$15,000
DC DELEGATION COMMUNICATION/PODCAST SERIES	\$9,000
STIPEND/EXPENSES FOR DELEGATION INTERN PROGRAMS	\$10,800
LEGISLATIVE MONITORING AND OUTREACH SERVICES	\$15,500
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS	\$2,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT	\$3,000
MISCELLANEOUS	\$1,000
TOTAL AR-0 NPS EXPENSES	\$105,000

- Senator Jain moved an amendment in a substitute to expand capacity and reallocate funds as follows:

STATEHOOD INITIATIVES – FISCAL YEAR 2026	
INITIATIVE	DOLLAR AMOUNT
STAFF ASSISTANT CONTRACTING SERVICES	\$51,500
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION EFFORTS AND TRAVEL	\$10,000
ENGAGEMENT WITH MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR DC STATEHOOD	\$5,000
AI OPTIMIZATION FOR COMPLETING DELEGATION TASKS	\$5,000
DC STATEHOOD COMMUNICATION SERVICES	\$9,000
WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING SERVICES FOR DELEGATION MEMBERS	\$7,000
TARGETED STATES OUTREACH AND TRAVEL	\$8,000
FALL 2025 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR STATEHOOD DELEGATION	\$10,800
SPRING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR STATEHOOD DELEGATION	\$10,800
SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR STATEHOOD DELEGATION	\$11,100
FALL 2026 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR STATEHOOD DELEGATION	\$11,100
PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY SERVICES FOR US REPRESENTATIVE	\$2,500
GRAPHIC DESIGN SOFTWARE	\$1,440
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES	\$2,000
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS	\$4,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT	\$1,000
MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES	\$1,000
TOTAL AR-0 NPS EXPENSES	\$151,240
DISCRETIONARY FUNDS TRANSFER (\$8,000 x 3)	\$24,000

TOTAL STATEHOOD INITIATIVES AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDS	\$175,240
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Debate and Amendments:

- Senator Strauss expressed concern the substitute reduced out-of-state outreach and the 51 Stars program, arguing in-person state outreach remains necessary.
- Chairman Mendelson noted available fund balance and proposed compromise adjustments:
 - Reduce staff assistant contracting by \$5,000.
 - Reduce internship total by \$5,000.
 - Maintain a \$10,000 allocation for the 51 Stars program (instead of zero).
- Senator Jain accepted Chairman Mendelson's amendment as a friendly amendment to his substitute.
- The amended substitute budget was put to voice vote and adopted unanimously as amended.

Other Business:

- At 3:53PM Senator Jain announced intent to propose a formal bylaws amendment at the next commission meeting establishing equal authority of commissioners and requiring written majority approval for reprogramming funds/personnel or other material changes.
- Public comment period included remarks and requests:
 - Concerns about the commission website lacking action items and recent legislative attacks on DC; request for more frequent commission meetings and clearer public action items.
 - Former Senator Michael Brown urged stronger support and funding for the delegation, pay for delegation members/staff, and less structural constraint by the commission.
 - Requests for benchmarks, measurable goals, and more funding for statehood efforts from community organizations and local Democratic groups.
 - One public member inquired about participation in the 51 Stars Program.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:18 pm.