

51st State Speakers Bureau Training

August 17, 2016



What is the New Columbia Statehood Speakers Bureau?

A speakers bureau is a volunteer group of speakers who are qualified to talk to the public about its interest or expertise in some area. The New Columbia Statehood Commission was created to educate and inform the public about local efforts to achieve full US citizenship through Statehood. This body of volunteer speakers will engage the community at large to educate citizens about the Statehood process.



Why Develop a Speakers Bureau?

- Increase public understanding of the New Columbia Statehood Commission (NCSC)
- Raise public awareness about Statehood
- Recruit new volunteers
- Attract press coverage
- Raise awareness of resource opportunities



Historic Perspective

- Lost the right to vote in Congress in 1801
- Only able to vote for President since 1964
- 1982 and 1987 Constitutions
- Congresswoman Norton introduces a statehood bill in Congress every session

Current NCSC Effort

- Update the Constitution
- Public engagement at Town Halls, online, and a three-day Constitutional Convention
- Developed boundaries, with a federal district
- November ballot question
- Petition to new President and Congress



November Ballot

DC Statehood will be on the November ballot. Voters will have the option to answer “YES” or “NO” to 1 question (with four parts):

- Do you want to become the 51st state?
- Do you approve the state constitution?
- Do you agree to the boundaries?
- Do you commit to a representative form of government?



Why DC Deserves Statehood

- Only democratic government where capital city cannot vote in national legislature
- More federal taxes per capita than any state (~\$38,000 per person. DE is second at ~\$24,000)
- More total federal taxes than 22 states in 2014
- Residents serve in the military and on federal juries
- Strong financial position – 21 consecutive balanced budgets and a \$13B FY16 budget from local taxes and fees



Why DC Deserves Statehood

- Larger population than 2 states – Vermont and Wyoming
- No minimum land size to become a state
- Congress can admit states by Act, so no constitutional amendment is required
- Ongoing civil rights violation
- DC residents deserve the same rights and representation enjoyed by all other American citizens



How to Present on Statehood

- Talk about why statehood is important to *you*
- Talk about why statehood might be important to your audience
- Speak in a style that works for you
- Make the ask



Make the Ask

- Answer any questions your audience has about the process or why statehood is important
- Tell them about the vote in November and make sure they understand the ballot question
- Ask them to tell their friends and coworkers, etc.
- Ask them to get involved and go to the website



Responding to Counterarguments

- Address their concerns or issues
- Understand common counterarguments to statehood:
 - DC is too small, too Democratic, too urban
 - Statehood requires a constitutional amendment
 - DC can retrocede to Maryland



Questions

If your audience has questions, have them:

- go to the statehood.dc.gov website
- email statehood@dc.gov, or
- call 202-724-7173

