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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2025

#### DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

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#### Joint Statement:

#### Proposed Bill to Overturn D.C. Home Rule is a Direct Attack on American Democracy and States' Rights

**Washington** - Two Republican legislators introduced a bill in the [House](#) and [Senate](#) yesterday named after Mayor Muriel Bowser that would eliminate Washington D.C.'s entire local government, including D.C.'s elected Mayor, City Council, and Attorney General. Washington, D.C.'s government, elected by the 700,000 people living in the city, would cease to exist, and all administration of the District would presumably pass to members of Congress who have no understanding of the values or problems of Washington D.C., and are not elected by D.C. residents.

This bill undermines the principles of self-governance and local control that conservatives have long championed. D.C. residents, the majority of whom are people of color, have frequently been subject to congressional override of local policies, and this latest federal overreach intensifies that long-standing injustice. For decades, Congress has blocked D.C. from making its own decisions on everything from controlling our own budget to having a congressionally-imposed building height-limit. No other jurisdiction in the country faces such an assault on its right to self-govern.

*"I am confident that we will defeat this anti-democratic messaging bill," said **United States Senator Ankit Jain (D-D.C.)**. "With so many pressing national issues to address, I question whether members of Congress want to take responsibility for governing a city with the size and importance of Washington, D.C. I urge the people of D.C. to join us in this fight and show Congress just how strongly we oppose this authoritarian power-grab."*

*"This bill offers zero guidance on how D.C.'s local affairs would be handled in the absence of a democratically elected Council and Mayor, suggesting it was intended as an attack on D.C. residents versus a thoughtful plan for improving the city," said **Vanessa Batters-Thompson, Executive Director of the DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice**. "While introduced under the guise of better management, this bill completely ignores a historical reality: The Home Rule Act was adopted on December 24, 1973 in part to relieve Congress of the burden of legislating on local matters."*



"The BOWSER Act is not about governance—it is about control. For too long, Congress has treated D.C. as a political pawn, overriding the will of its residents while refusing to grant them the full rights of citizenship," said **Deirdre Brown, Chair of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee**. "This bill is an insult to the principles of self-determination and local control that lawmakers claim to uphold, and we will not stand by as our democracy is dismantled. The people of D.C. will fight back, and we call on every American who believes in fairness and democracy to stand with us."

*"Members of Congress were elected by their constituents to represent them on matters of national importance. They were not elected to waste their time and taxpayer money on dictating the day-to-day affairs of District residents, who have our own local government," said **Monica Hopkins, Executive Director of the ACLU of the District of Columbia**. "It is deeply inefficient for Congress to spend their time on whether people can turn right on red lights in D.C. or on how the trash gets picked up in our neighborhoods. Micromanaging D.C. is not anything that voters elected Members of Congress to accomplish."*

*"The introduction of the BOWSER Act is a blatant attempt to strip away the hard-earned rights of nearly 700,000 DC residents. This federal overreach threatens our autonomy and disregards the principle of self-governance." said **Kelsye Adams, Executive Director of Long Live GoGo and Organizing Director at DC Vote**. "We demand that Congress keep their hands off DC and allow us to manage our own affairs. It's time to free DC from this undemocratic interference."*

*"Representative Ogles could be using his time right now to go after the billionaire who has compromised national security at multiple federal agencies this week," said **Keya Chatterjee, Executive Director of Free DC**. "It's incompetent and racist for this man to presume that he knows DC better than the people who live here, raise families here, or who are duly elected by the voters here."*

Adding to this injustice, Washington, D.C. is home to tens of thousands of veterans and active-duty service members. These individuals risked their lives in defense of American freedoms but would have their right to vote stripped away from them if this bill were to pass. They have fought to uphold the very principles of democracy that the sponsors of this bill are seeking to deny them at home.

D.C. taxpayers contribute more per capita to the federal government than any state, yet this bill seeks to take away from them not just a say over how their federal taxes are used, but any control over their local taxes as well. The fight for full voting rights and self-governance in the nation's capital is not just a D.C. issue—it is a test of America's commitment to democracy itself.

**ACLU of the District of Columbia**  
**American Association of University Women, DC Branch**  
**DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice**  
**DC Democratic Party**  
**DC Fiscal Policy Institute**  
**DC NOW**

**DC Vote**  
**District of Columbia Democratic Party**  
**Free DC**  
**Neighbors United for DC Statehood**  
**Task Force for Democracy**  
**Ward 3 Democratic Committee**  
**United States Senator Ankit Jain**