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Sendt: 22. juli 2005 17:00
Emne: From U.S. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton -- THANK YOU!!!!

Dear OSCE PA Delegates

I want to thank you for your support of the provision for equal voting rights in the U.S. Congress for the American citizens who live in Washington, D.C., our nation's capital, which is now part of the Washington Declaration. You have given great encouragement to the more than 600,000 residents of the District of Columbia, who are citizens, pay the same taxes as other Americans, and have fought and died in every war since the United States was established. We are seeking international support to move forward on an issue that has resisted remediation by the U.S. Congress despite two centuries of protests and false starts. Now the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE has joined the Organization of American States (OAS) Human Rights Commission, which, in February 2004, found denial of voting representation in the U.S. Congress to be a violation of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

Our great frustration has been that even most Americans are unaware that the residents of the nation's capital are treated unequally, but we are gratified that polls show that Americans overwhelmingly support equal voting rights for D.C. residents. Most Europeans and other people in the world also are likely unaware of this denial.

Armed with our provision in the Washington Declaration, we hope that you will become messengers to the world, helping in educating and informing people that the United States is the only democratic country in the world that denies the residents of its capital representation in its national legislature. This denial is so astonishing, particularly for a world power insisting on the spread of democracy worldwide, that when it becomes better known, it will fall.

The origins of this denial are complex and the reasons for its survival for more than 200 years shift-parochial, partisan, and even racial-as causes for congressional inaction. We are certain that action will occur when the rest of the world knows that this denial of human rights is embedded in our country and when it is exposed. The Washington Declaration can become an important instrument for the full freedom of the citizens of the nation's capital if you help spread the word about the congressional voting rights provision of the Washington Declaration. For your support and your part in helping us raise the consciousness of the world to this human rights issue, we are profoundly grateful.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Holmes Norton