We want to have the same rights as American citizens who live in the 50 states. We are the 680,000 people who live in Washington, D.C., more than the population of Wyoming and Vermont.

We have no voting representation in Congress, no rights of local self-government and no protection of key constitutional rights like the 14th amendment, because D.C. residents don't live in a state. Many basic rights and protections offered by the U.S. Constitution are limited to people who live in a state. Congress can override our local budget and local laws in ways that it cannot do elsewhere. Yet we bear all the responsibilities of citizenship, including paying federal taxes, serving on federal juries, serving in the military and raising local taxes to pay for local government.

We have endured this injustice for over 200 years, but there is a solution. We can make the residential and commercial areas of the District of Columbia the 51st State, while preserving a smaller federal district (containing the White House, Capitol, Supreme Court, National Mall and other federal properties) as the Constitution requires.

By creating the 51st state, the people who currently live in D.C. can finally enjoy the same rights other Americans enjoy. We can do this without a constitutional amendment, with a simple majority vote of Congress -- this is how all the other states except the original 13 were admitted into the union. It is the simplest, most straightforward way to grant D.C. residents the same rights as other Americans.

Legislation to create the 51st State is before both houses of Congress. The good news is that statehood for the people of D.C. has more Congressional support than it has ever had, including several members of Congress from neighboring Maryland and Virginia. The challenge is that to pass the legislation, we will need the support of people in the 50 states.

To support creating the 51st State, please sign our online petition at www.dcstatehoodcoalition.org/how-you-can-help/.

To find out if your members of Congress support the 51st State and to learn more about our campaign, please click here or go to www.dcstatehoodcoalition.org.