



May 25, 2016

Oppose H.R. 5233: More “Taxation without Representation” in DC Affairs

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national advocacy organizations, we urge you to oppose H.R. 5233, the “Clarifying Congressional Intent in Providing for DC Home Rule Act of 2016.” H.R. 5233 would overturn a DC ballot initiative, enacted in 2013 by 80 per cent of the local voting (and federally-taxpaying) population, to allow the city to spend purely locally-raised revenue without Congressional approval. Once again, the House, through H.R. 5233, seeks to intrude upon the ability of D.C. residents, acting through their democratically-elected government, to determine purely local matters for themselves.

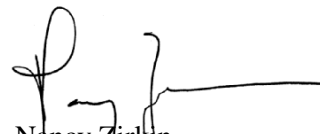
The Leadership Conference takes no position on the underlying DC law. Where we stand firm, however, is in the belief that certain spending matters must be left to District of Columbia residents to determine for themselves, and on the process through which Congress is intervening in those matters. Any attempt by Congress to re-write purely local laws involving purely local dollars, with no input whatsoever from the residents who will live with the consequences, even in the constitutionally-unique District of Columbia, makes a mockery of home rule and betrays the notion of government by the “consent of the governed.”

The Leadership Conference recognizes that Congress has special authority over the District of Columbia. We believe, however, that this authority must be exercised with the utmost restraint, and only when the interests of our nation as a whole are at stake. Congress can and should use this authority to end “taxation without representation” within the District. It should not use it to make the situation even worse.

For these reasons, we urge you to reject this latest effort to legislate within the District of Columbia without any meaningful input from the District of Columbia. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Senior Counsel Rob Randhava at (202) 466-6058.

Sincerely,


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