



MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

July 5, 2020

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
2136 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Norton:


With forward momentum and progress on our journey to DC Statehood, I write to ask for your support for the District regaining local control of parole functions through federal legislation. As you know, the U.S. Parole Commission ("Commission") has sole authority for granting parole to DC Code offenders serving indeterminate sentences for offenses committed before August 5, 2000. Through this authority, the Commission has complete discretion over who will be granted release on parole, and when. It also has the authority to enforce conditions of parole on individuals serving parole or supervised release.

By localizing parole authority for these individuals, the District will have proper oversight of this administrative entity, which has a profound impact on thousands of DC residents and their families. Each year, hundreds of DC parolees are returned to prison, often for technical violations. It is important for decisions of this magnitude to be made by DC residents and that they be accountable to our community and our elected officials. It is only by establishing local control of parole that we can ensure it reflects our DC values.

As you are aware, the congressional authorization for the Commission expires in October. Previously, Congress extended the Commission by five years and may do so again in the fall. We believe, however, the law should instead be amended to sunset the Commission's authority over DC parole after two years, which will be sufficient for us to plan, prepare, and fund an orderly transition of the parole function to local control. Autonomy over parole is an important step we must take on our path to statehood.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We are fully committed to working with you as we seek to regain control over this critical component of our criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

  
Muriel Bowser  
Mayor