



Senate committee to hold hearing on DC statehood next week

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The latest push for D.C. statehood will be front and center next week during a hearing held by the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

H.R. 51 passed in the House in April, and its odds of passing in the upper chamber are decidedly slim, but proponents are bringing a familiar face back to Capitol Hill next Tuesday: former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman. The centrist Democrat is among those who will back the bill during the 10 a.m. hearing, titled "Examining D.C. Statehood."

Lieberman introduced a similar bill back in 2012 before leaving the Senate.

The District's delegate to Congress, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser will also address the committee. Rounding out the scheduled speakers are National Urban League President/CEO Marc Morial, two law school professors and statehood opponent Roger Pilon of the Cato Institute.

The bill would make nearly all of D.C. ("Douglass Commonwealth") the 51st state, while reducing the size of the nation's "capital" to an area around the National Mall.

Republicans claim the push for statehood is a power grab. Statehood proponents point out that nearly 700,000 District residents — many of whom are Black — still lack full representation in Congress, unlike states such as Idaho and Wyoming, which have smaller, much-whiter populations.

"D.C. statehood now has 54% support nationwide, according to the most recent detailed poll," Norton said in a statement Tuesday, "and I expect that support to grow even more after the Senate hearing. ... As only the second Senate hearing ever on D.C. statehood, next week will be historic."