

Sweet Honey in the Rock "Ballad of the Broken Word/Give the People Their Right 14to Vote!"

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CHORUS:

No taxation

Without representation!

Two hundred years of exploitation

In the capital of this nation!

No representation!

In the capital of this nation

Two hundred years of exploitation

Give the people their right to vote!

Someone asked me, was it true?

The voting rights of the District were long overdue?

They couldn't believe it when I said, Ayes!

And then I said, Ayou ain=t heard nothing yet

We are based in Washington, DC

A truly diverse community

Almost six hundred thousand strong

Have been exploited much too long

Inadequate power over our own affairs

And national issues for which we care

No votes in Congress, the Senate, the House

No state delegation, no representation

We pledge allegiance, Amy country tis of thee

Fight in wars, pay taxes in this country

Provide work and services for the government

We get no vote, but our money is spent

You may wonder, how in the world can this be?

I thought we lived in a democracy

The US constitution gives equal protection

Check the 14th amendment to make this connection

CHORUS

In 1787 the US constitution was ratified

US Congress won the power to exclusively exercise

In all cases, legislation

Over the future capital of this nation

In 1790, selection of the District site began

Using a piece of Virginia and a piece of Maryland

Forming the District of Columbia, or Washington, DC

But the people kept on voting in their former states,

you see

In 1800, Congress took control of DC

Ended representation for the whole community

In the history of this country you will find the reason why
And even in a new millennium, they want this law to
apply

In 1846, the portion of DC

From Virginia decided to retrocede

It was returned to the original state line

Alexandria and Arlington came after this time

In 1871, an elected delegate with no vote

Was created for the House of Representatives - no
joke!

DC was given territorial government that year

Representation remained an issue, do you hear?

In 1874, financial troubles arise

The position of nonvoting delegate meets its demise

The territorial government that was given to DC

Was taken back by Congress at this point of history

In 1970, the House brings the position back

Years of civil rights activism brought pressure with no
slack

A step in the right direction brought the people so
much joy

And the man in this position, was Walter Faunteroy

In 1978, Congress finally said okay

To the DC Voting Rights Act, but not right away

If approved within seven years with no hesitation

DC would be granted full representation

In 1985, our hopes were really, really high

We knew that they should not let this bill die

All we needed was approval of thirty eight states

But only sixteen states would support our case

In 1993, the District made a giant step

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton worked hard
to get

A DC Vote on the House floor, which Congress did
approve

But when Republicans came to power, the decision was
overruled

CHORUS

Now, I'm sure you are wondering what can be done?

There are at least four ways that this fight can be won

Some suggest we retrocede as a part of Maryland

Become a city or county in that state once again

Or a new law could pass with a Congressional vote

DC residents would be counted in the Maryland vote

For Federal elections, census taking - without
retroceding back

This would leave our residency intact

Or, Congress could pass another law for DC

Like they did in 1800 when they took over totally

For more than five hundred reasons they treat us like a
state

And adding another reason, should not a problem
create
This would give us two US Senate seats
And the census would determine the number of House
seats
Preferably, DC would be the 51st state
We'd have a seat in the House and two in the Senate -
it=s not too late!!
Democracy is what we want!
Voting rights are what we need!
Tell your Congress person, it=s time to take heed!
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CHORUS

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