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Thomas Calls for Reestablishment of D.C. Statehood and Compact Commissions

Washington DC—Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr. announced at the February 5, 2009 D.C. Green Party’s panel discussion on statehood that he intends to introduce legislation to reestablish the D.C. Statehood and Compact Commissions. The law establishing the original Commissions was repealed in 1994.

In 1979, a Statehood Initiative was presented to D.C. residents for a vote to approve legislation that would begin a concerted effort to make the District a state. The final enabling legislation, D.C. Law 3-171, provided for the creation of two commissions -- the D.C. Statehood Commission and the D.C. Compact Commission.

The purpose of the Statehood Commission was to "educate, promote, and advance the proposition of statehood for the District of Columbia in the District and elsewhere." The Compact Commission was given the responsibility to conduct a "full and complete study of the necessary and appropriate legislative and administration action" to achieve statehood.¹

“What I am looking to institute this Council period is to combine both functionalities into one commission dedicated to achieving full statehood rights as detailed in the U.S. Constitution,” said Councilmember Thomas. “It is only right that the District of Columbia have two elected Senators and House Representatives based on the population of the District.”

¹ Information provided by www.standupfordemocracy.org