



STATEMENT TO GERTRUDE STEIN DEMOCRATIC CLUB

MAY 18, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement on behalf of my campaign for re-election to the position of Statehood Representative, also referred to as the “Shadow” Representative”. In 2006, and again in 2008, I was honored to have received the endorsement of this club, and I hope my efforts during these two terms will result in another endorsement in 2010.

As many of you know, I have been vocal supporter of issues that affect the LGBT community, and most recently have proud to be a “straight ally” on the drive for marriage equality. Specifically, I have used my position to advocate against any possible Congressional blockage of the marriage equality bill that was passed overwhelmingly by our locally elected DC Council. I was especially vocal in opposing Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Bob King’s efforts on Capitol Hill to stop enactment of the legislation. His misguided efforts would not only jeopardize the implementation of the law, but it would give Congress additional incentives to meddle in the District’s local affairs on a wide range of issues.

I spoke often about this issue, and as you can see I did not mince words when asked by the media about his efforts:

“Commissioner King's lobbying of Congress to stop the same-sex marriage bill from becoming law seriously undermines the District's efforts for greater autonomy and expanded home rule.

By taking this fight to Congress not only is he re-enforcing our 'second-class citizen' status, he is actively embracing it. His efforts will only embolden members of Congress to expand their meddling in our municipal affairs.

Frankly, I expected better from an elected District official.”

Mike Panetta, Quoted in DCist.com, December 9, 2009
http://dcist.com/2009/12/while_the_dc_council_waits.php

The legalization of same-sex marriage in the District was a great victory, but it is by no means a permanent situation. Changes in partisan control of the House or Senate will likely result in efforts to overturn the law and to revoke the licenses of any couples previously married in the District. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of Representatives, Senators and local clergy that will try to make that happen. I will continue to fight any efforts in Congress that undermine our home rule or attempt to end same-sex marriages in DC.

To help ensure we have a Congress that is as friendly as possible to the District, I started a federal political action committee in 2008 called the **Free and Equal DC Fund**, which I've used to support candidates that are supportive of expanded home-rule and statehood – and to oppose those who are not. In the current election cycle the PAC has already targeted the ranking Republican on the District of Columbia sub-committee, and vocal opponent of same-sex marriage, Representative Jason Chaffetz from Utah. I'm planning to be active in at least a half-dozen races this year through this PAC, so please support these efforts by donating at <http://www.FreeandEqualDC.com>

Since taking office, I have been worked to pass the *District of Columbia Voting Rights Act*, and my efforts resulted in over 20,000 messages from people outside of DC to Congress in support of that legislation. However, given the expiration census-based Utah compromise and the poison pill gun amendments that always seem to scuttle the legislation, it's time the District of Columbia got aggressively back into the statehood business.

Only through statehood will the District have full and complete legislative and budgetary autonomy thus ensuring our locally enacted laws on same-sex marriage, medical marijuana, needle exchange programs, firearm regulation and other important issues are permanently removed from congressional control.

I'll continue to work closely with Councilmember Yvette Alexander, the newly appointed chair of the Special Committee on Statehood and Self-Determination, other members of the Statehood Delegation, DC Vote, and other elected officials and organizations on these efforts and will be launching an expanded public awareness campaign to re-vitalize statehood efforts in the coming weeks.

There is still so much work to do for the people of the District of Columbia, and I'd like to keep working on their behalf as the U.S. "Shadow" Representative. For me, it has been a labor of love and I hope I can get your endorsement vote tonight so that I continue the fight.

I'm always available for your questions or comments at (202) 253-6534 or mike@mikepanetta.com or via the social media links below. Thank you for being such an important part of our community, and I look forward to the endorsement vote.



<http://www.twitter.com/MikePanetta>



<http://www.facebook.com/mikepanetta>



<http://delicious.com/mikepanetta>



<http://foursquare.com/user/mikepanetta>



QR Code