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Voting rights for noncitizen permanent residents

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the District Council Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, and the District Council, to approve the Local Residents Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2017, Council bill B22-074.

Why: Many District residents, and an estimated 21% of Mount Pleasant residents, are legal, permanent residents of the United States, working and paying taxes in the District, and yet not allowed to vote, lacking citizenship. That they have not achieved citizenship does not change their being taxed without representation, which we all agree is wrong. As was commonly the case in the United States before the anti-immigrant fervor of the early 20th century, legal residents should be allowed to vote, regardless of citizenship status.

This ANC has supported voting rights for noncitizen residents since 2003. In 2005, for a special election to fill an ANC vacancy, this commission invited noncitizen residents of Mount Pleasant to vote, though such votes could be only symbolic, and did not count towards the actual election. That was, nonetheless, a demonstration to the large immigrant population of Mount Pleasant that they have a right to be heard in local elections, and a number of our neighbors did cast ballots in that election, even though they would not count. That surely confirmed the desire noncitizen residents have in taking part in local government.

The District complains about taxation without representation being inflicted on District residents, as a result of the District's having no voting representation in Congress. If taxation without representation is wrong for District residents, paying Federal taxes, then surely it is wrong also for noncitizen residents of the District, paying District taxes. Extension of voting rights to noncitizen residents would affirm the validity of the District's complaints about Federal taxation without representation.

In 2015 this ANC supported the bill in Council that would extend the right to vote in local elections to noncitizen residents. We reiterate that support today, for the Local Residents Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2017.

Passed by 5 to 0 vote at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANC1D on February 21, 2017, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Stewart, Romero-Latin, Karaffa, Karrer, McKay. A quorum for this commission is three; five commissioners were present.