

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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DAVIS AND NORTON INTRODUCE D.C.
OMNIBUS AUTHORIZATION ACT

Act would promote efficiency and discourage appropriation riders

Washington, D.C. - House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) today introduced the 2004 District of Columbia Omnibus Authorization Act, a bill to provide a new annual vehicle for enacting laws that change the Home Rule Charter or involve federal laws without attaching them as riders to the D.C. appropriation. The annual D.C. authorizing bill would be separate from the appropriations bill.

This bill is “unprecedented and uniquely important” in that it is the first time that the D.C. authorizing committee has acted proactively to introduce a bill to enact major legislation already passed by the City Council and signed by the Mayor to improve city government operations. This year’s bill includes vital provisions in areas such as monitoring school budgets, court operations, City Council review of the Mayor’s budget, and the regulation of D.C.-chartered banks, among other laws. Davis and Norton worked closely with the District on this new departure for the authorizing committees in the House and Senate.

“Up to this point, the District has had no choice but to go through the appropriations process for assistance on authorization related matters, such as those in this bill. We haven’t been doing our jobs as authorizers by forcing the District to go through the appropriations process in order to achieve much needed reforms to the operations of the local government,” commented Chairman Davis.

Norton said, “An annual authorizing bill efficiently moves forward a package of D.C.-passed bills and federal bills that need congressional action to become law. This vehicle also will help eliminate riders to the D.C. appropriation, which have hamstrung

our government and nullified the expressed wishes of our local officials and D.C. residents themselves.”

Following is a list of laws that would be enacted as a result of the Norton/Davis bill in the first year of passage:

- 1) A new requirement that the School Board submit to the Mayor a budget reconciliation plan for the specific allocation of funds under the Mayor’s proposed annual budget.
- 2) A new section of the D.C. Code added to give the D.C. courts multi-year contracting and leasing agreement authority. The purpose of this section is to give the courts 10 year leasing authority, which is necessary in today’s real estate market. By comparison, GSA has 20 year leasing authority. This provision also includes multi-year contract authority for services and other procurement items.
- 3) An amendment to the Home Rule Act to change the fiscal year for D.C. Public Schools (including public charter schools) and the University of the District of Columbia from October 1st to September 30th to July 1st to June 30th, beginning in FY07. The purpose of this change is to establish the academic year as the fiscal year.
- 4) An amendment to the Home Rule Act removing “50 calendar days,” and inserting “56 calendar days,” to provide the City Council with an additional 6 days to review the Mayor’s proposed budget. The District’s budget process includes a weeklong spring recess around Easter and falls in the middle of the 50-day review period. Having 6 more days will make up for this loss of time.
- 5) An amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act to allow the city to offer alternative work schedules (flextime) to all D.C. employees.
- 6) An amendment to the D.C. Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act to allow forced annual leave or forced leave without pay to be used as a disciplinary action for Corporation Counsel attorneys while an investigation is underway for alleged misconduct. Currently the statute allows only removal, suspension, or reduction in grade for pre-1980 employees.
- 7) An amendment to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to change the oversight of D.C.-chartered banks from the U.S. Office of the Comptroller to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). In all 50 states, state-chartered banks are regulated by the FDIC and the state-banking regulator, and nationally-charted banks are regulated by the Office of the Comptroller. D.C. banking law would conform with that of states, relieving the current regulatory burden that has discouraged the establishment of D.C.-charted banks.

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