

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Senate Passes D.C. Omnibus Authorization Act**

*Act Would Promote Efficiency and Discourage Appropriation Riders  
Legislation Heads to the White House*

**Washington, DC** – House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) are pleased to announce that the Senate yesterday unanimously approved H.R. 3797, “The 2004 D.C. Omnibus Authorization Act.” The bill provides 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. This annual D.C. authorizing bill will be separate from the appropriations bill. Introduced by Norton and Davis, H.R. 3797 passed out of the House in June; it now heads to the President’s desk for signature.

This bill is “unprecedented and uniquely important” in that it is the first time that the D.C. authorizing committee has proactively introduced a bill to enact major legislation already passed by the City Council and signed by the Mayor to improve city government operations.

Many of the provisions are minor in federal government terms but are of major importance to employees, businesses, economic development, and D.C. government efficiency. Provisions of H.R. 3797 include: an amendment to the Home Rule Act to change the fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>) for D.C. Public Schools to the academic year (July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>); an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act to allow the city to offer alternative work schedules (flextime) to D.C. employees; an amendment to the D.C. Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act to expand disciplinary action against Corporation Counsel attorneys under investigation for alleged misconduct; and an amendment to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to change the oversight of D.C.-chartered banks to comply with regulations governing banks chartered

in the rest of the nation.

“The District has been forced to wade through the appropriations process for assistance on authorization related matters. We haven’t been doing our jobs as authorizers; appropriations bills are no way to make or change laws” Chairman Davis said. “In previous years, important D.C. reforms have often been held hostage in the appropriations process. This legislation paves the way for an annual authorization bill free of contentious appropriations debate and helps eliminate riders to the D.C. appropriation.”

Norton said, “I appreciate the attention that Chairman Davis and our Government Reform Committee have given to initiating this new and more efficient procedure in Congress. These are provisions that local and state governments routinely pass, as D.C. has done with these items. I believe that such matters of some seriousness to the District, but of no consequence or relevance to the federal government, should not be in a charter, the functional equivalent of a constitution. However, until such items can be removed, our Committee has streamlined passage and this has helped make an important official process far more efficient. At the same time, we have eliminated another barrier by avoiding use of the appropriation process to make legislative changes.”

Davis and Norton worked closely with the District on this new departure for the authorizing committees in the House and Senate.

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