

D.C. Delegate Appointment - Evidence Card 2

Tag Line

The Founders intentionally designed the federal district to remain outside state control to prevent undue influence over the federal government

Verbal Citation

James Madison, in Federalist No. 43, explained that "The indispensable necessity of compleat authority at the seat of Government carries its own evidence with it. It is a power exercised by every Legislature of the Union, I might say of the world, by virtue of its general supremacy. Without it, not only the public authority might be insulted and its proceedings be interrupted, with impunity; but a dependence of the members of the general Government, on the State comprehending the seat of the Government for protection in the exercise of their duty, might bring on the national councils an imputation of awe or influence, equally dishonorable to the Government, and dissatisfactory to the other members of the confederacy."

What the evidence says in context

Madison argues that the federal government needs complete authority over its seat of government to prevent state governments from having leverage over federal operations. He warns that if the capital were located within a state, that state could potentially interfere with federal proceedings or use its control over the capital area to influence national policy, which would undermine the independence of the federal government and create tensions among the states.

Impact

This evidence demonstrates that granting D.C. voting representation would fundamentally alter the Founders' constitutional design for federal independence, potentially allowing local politics to interfere with essential government operations and compromising the separation between federal and state authority that protects national governance from regional manipulation.

Webpage or Book Title

The Federalist Papers

URL or page number

Federalist No. 43

Article Title if Applicable

The Federalist No. 43: The Same Subject Continued: The Powers Conferred by the Constitution Further Considered

Author or Publisher

James Madison

Date first published

1788

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N/A

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