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## **Press Release - Senator Muskie speaks on Home Rule for the District of Columbia**

Edmund S. Muskie

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# MUSKIE

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FOR RELEASE

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IMMEDIATELY  
February 9, 1972

## SENATOR MUSKIE SPEAKS ON HOME RULE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me) today, February 9, 1972, issued the following statement regarding the hearings on home rule for the District of Columbia held yesterday before the House District Committee, where a witness questioned whether the citizens of the District of Columbia were worthy of home rule:

Yesterday became a day of regret and dismay for the Congress, when the issue of race was injected into the debate over home rule for the District of Columbia. I had thought the time had long passed when anyone would suggest that race has any relevance to the recognition of fundamental rights. Home rule for residents of the District involves, in its most basic sense, the right of self-government. That alone is the issue.

Home rule for the District of Columbia should have been granted decades ago. Congress has debated the subject regularly, and the Senate has passed home rule legislation frequently, but home rule remains far from a reality. This sorry history must be ended. I think the 92nd Congress should be the Congress which finally gives meaning to the principle of self-government for residents of the District. Either the home rule bill passed overwhelmingly by the Senate in October or the legislation now advocated by Representative Fauntroy in the House would achieve this goal. This legislation must be given the highest priority now so that it will clear Congress this year.

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