

**STOP D.C. VOUCHERS NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Contact: Melody Webb  
[Melodywebb@lobbyline.com](mailto:Melodywebb@lobbyline.com), [www.stopdevouchers.org](http://www.stopdevouchers.org)  
(202)554-8519, (202)276-9253, cell

June 29, 2003

**DAVIS' BILL A HALF-STEP TOWARD D.C. DEMOCRACY WITH NEW VOTING RIGHTS PLAN AS HE CONTINUES TO UNDERCUT DEMOCRACY THROUGH VOUCHERS PLAN FOR D.C.:**

Plan Called A Smokescreen for Recent Efforts to Impose a Locally Unpopular Voucher Plan on D.C. Residents

Washington, D.C. -- Stop D.C. Vouchers calls a half-step the new proposal by Tom Davis for a vote in the House of Representatives for D.C., warning that the ostensible intent of the plan – promoting democracy for D.C. residents, contrasts starkly with the democracy-undermining congressional voucher legislation for D.C. that has no grassroots origin or support in D.C.

The powerful Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), chairman of the Government Reform Committee that governs D.C., stands behind both the congressional voucher plan for D.C. and talks of a plan to give the District of Columbia one voting representative in the House. Tom Davis has authored legislation for HR-2556, which proposes a taxpayer funded private school tuition grant program for D.C. children. On Thursday, June 26 Davis revealed plans to draft legislation to give D.C. and Utah with it, a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The hypocrisy is astounding. Rep. Davis pulls the rug from underneath D.C.'s movement for home rule one week through voucher legislation and starts a slow waltz with D.C. through talks of a voting rights plan the next. This is why we need statehood. This is why we need full constitutionally-guaranteed democracy" said Melody Webb, a D.C. public schools parent-activist and attorney, who started Stop D.C. Vouchers, a campaign to stop the congressional voucher plan for Washington, D.C.

"In other words, Rep. Davis is saying to D.C. residents 'you deserve democracy enough to get a vote in Congress on the one hand. Yet, when it comes to determining how your schools are run - democracy goes out of the window'" continued Webb.

"If Congress supports democracy for D.C. it should immediately scuttle these plans for a voucher program, which D.C. residents have rejected time and time again, through a referendum and opinion polls. On the eve of launching a voting rights bill to give us a say in national government, Rep. Davis is vigorously advancing legislation to take away our voice over our education system." said Ms. Webb.

"We have to open our eyes to the relationship between all the things at play - vouchers, home rule, and voting rights. With one hand, Davis wants to give a vote in Congress for democracy and the other to take it away, overriding local opposition to vouchers and self determination. Maybe the voting rights legislation is just a smokescreen for recent efforts to impose a locally unpopular voucher plan on D.C. residents. Davis is trying to deflect attention away from his democracy-defeating voucher push. If Tom Davis is serious about democracy for D.C., he should advance the objective of statehood, which would grant self government as well as voting representation in Congress to D.C.. These are the inseparable twins of real democracy for D.C."

#####