STATEMENT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) IN OPPOSITION TO DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOME RULE BILL ON SENATE FLOOR ON AUGUST 1958.

MR. PRESIDENT:

The desire for self-government is commendable in any people. Such a desire is in conformity with the heritage of the American people. Manifestations toward local self-government should be encouraged. No one is more firmly convinced of the desirability and feasibility of local self-government than I.

I regret, Mr. President, that the Senate of the United States must again face the question of home rule for the District of Columbia in a form which is inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States. The Congress of the United States has the power "to exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, ... And, to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof."

There is but one way in which true home rule or, as I would prefer to express it, local self-government, can be constitutionally granted to the District of Columbia. That method is by amendment to the Constitution of the United States as provided in Article V of that document.
The proposed bill would delegate the exclusive authority of Congress to govern the District of Columbia to the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and to a fifteen-man assembly elected by the residents of the District of Columbia. Such a delegation would be in conflict with both the spirit and the letter of Article V of the Constitution.

The amendment offered by the Distinguished Senior Senator from Oregon is subject to the same objection, for it contemplates the establishment of local self-government in the District of Columbia by means other than a constitutional amendment.

For these reasons, I must vote against both the amendment by the Senator from Oregon and S. 1846, the bill reported by the committee.