

Van Der Zee, and novelist Edith Wharton. The town has facilitated the preservation of The Mount, Ms. Wharton's country estate, which is a National Historic Landmark and welcomes tens of thousands of visitors annually. Lenox is also renowned for its cultivation and encouragement of the musical arts through the annual Tanglewood Music Festival, as well as the Tanglewood Estate which has served as the summer home for the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1937. The town also boasts the new international campus of Shakespeare and Company, a popular theater group and world-famous center for creative excellence in the arts.

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Lenox, Massachusetts has been a place of historical importance and cultural renaissance since its founding in 1767. Additionally, its admirable promotion of the arts is certainly worthy of recognition. Lenox is a place of outstanding character and I am proud to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives. As the town celebrates their 250th anniversary with a town-wide parade, I wish them all the best and continued prosperity.

**HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, MS.
FANNIE LOU HAMER**

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the civil rights icon and voting rights activist, Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer. Ms. Hamer is fondly remembered and admired for her activism during the Civil Rights Movement while speaking out against the injustices that African Americans faced in Mississippi and across the United States.

Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer was born in Montgomery County, Mississippi, to a family of impoverished share croppers. At just six years old, her family expected her to work in the fields, which she continued to do for most of her early life until she was fired for trying to register to vote.

At 37 years old, Ms. Hamer launched her career in political activism, which soon became her chief mission in life. Ms. Hamer attended a meeting hosted by the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) where she first registered to vote and became a field worker on the voter registration committee. In 1964, she attended the Democratic Convention in Atlanta and eventually helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Ms. Hamer became one of the faces of the civil rights struggle in Mississippi.

While the Voting Rights Act of 1965 codified what Ms. Hamer fought so hard for in our country, there still remains much to do. Before the 2016 election, 14 states adopted new voter laws under the guise of combating voter fraud, which essentially created new barriers to voting for tens of thousands of low-income citizens and citizens of color. Later, the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder* left many across the nation without their fundamental right to vote by reversing a key formula used in the Voting Rights Act to hold states accountable. On May 11, 2017, President

Trump issued an executive order that would create an "election integrity" commission, which has been stated to combat voter fraud, but in reality will lead to a repeat of the egregious mistakes of our past.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Hamer's persistence and diligence in her fight for voting rights was integral to the Civil Rights Movement and the eventual passage of legislation that protected the right to vote for all citizens. We must continue to remember her struggle, as the struggle continues even to this day. By honoring Ms. Hamer's legacy, we can learn from the mistakes of our past and recognize those who had fought for a better future.

**DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIR-
PORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION
ACT OF 2017**

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I fully support a long-term extension of FAA authority, and I am very concerned that the expiration on September 30th will have serious consequences for our air safety and economy. Congress owes the American people a bill that will provide stability for our air traffic controllers and keep our skies safe. So I am extremely disappointed that the Republican leadership has decided to attach a number of controversial and partisan policy provisions that are not germane to air travel and for that reason, I cannot support the bill in its original form.

For example, this legislation contains provisions that relate to hurricane disaster relief and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Unfortunately, this bill does not extend reauthorization, increase borrowing authority, or address the overall stability of the NFIP. Instead, Republicans have decided to use this legislation as a vehicle to develop the private flood insurance market. Furthermore, the provisions providing tax relief to hurricane victims are woefully inadequate in assisting our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Additionally, while this bill extends authority for a number of health care programs, Republicans have decided to disregard essential bipartisan priorities like the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Community Health Centers. These programs require immediate reauthorization, and failure to do so will leave states like Minnesota without money to provide healthcare for babies, children, and expecting mothers. Community health centers across the country will lose the support they need to provide basic healthcare. Some will even be forced to close. The bill also fails to address the urgent need to reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program. While a short-term extension is included for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, the funding is inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, these are all important issues, and deserve immediate Congressional action, but the only way to solve them is with bipartisan solutions. Half measures and political games will only waste more time, and Democrats stand ready to work with our Republican

colleagues to address each of these issues in a more thoughtful way.

The Republican leadership has had nine months to work out a bipartisan, long-term solution for FAA Reauthorization. Instead of working with Democrats to pass a customary multi-year reauthorization, the Republican leadership waited until the last minute to push forward only a six month patch. Republicans then wasted more time by including a number of unrelated and partisan provisions that had nothing to do with FAA Reauthorization. Their decision to include a provision that would have effectively dismantled the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) ensured that the previous version of this bill would never pass the Senate.

We owe the American public and our air traffic controllers better. Playing political games with something as important as airline safety is unacceptable. Failure to reauthorize FAA authority would leave our air traffic controllers and the travelling public at great risk. Not only would a lapse in reauthorization mean furloughs for tens of thousands of air traffic controllers, but it would also force vital airport improvement projects to come to a halt. The effects of this shutdown would have serious implications on America's economy and air safety.

Now that the Senate has stripped out the most controversial provisions of this legislation, I am able to support it. However, Congress must put aside partisan differences, work together, and produce a long-term extension that our airline industry so desperately needs.

**FANNIE LOU HAMER—
NEVERTHELESS, SHE PERSISTED**

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of an American hero, Fannie Lou Hamer. A leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Fannie Lou Hamer faced down racism, violence, prison, and more in her fight for the right to vote. This week marks what would be Hamer's 100th birthday, giving us an opportunity to reflect on Fannie Lou's legacy, her persistence in the face of adversity, and what her story means for our country today.

For those of you who are not familiar with Hamer's story, Fannie Lou was born in 1917 in Mississippi, the youngest of 20 children. Her family worked as sharecroppers in Mississippi, and at the age of six, Fannie Lou joined them picking cotton.

It was in 1962, after nearly forty years of working in the fields that Fannie Lou Hamer tried to register to vote. For African Americans in Mississippi during the Jim Crow era, registering to vote was an act of extraordinary courage. This was a time when black men and women, mothers and daughters, and fathers and sons were beaten and lynched by white mobs with no legal repercussions.

Fannie Lou knew these dangers, but nevertheless, she persisted. In August of 1962, she traveled to Indianola, Mississippi to register to vote. When she returned home after registering, she was fired by the owner of the plantation she worked on, who had warned her against registering.

But nevertheless, she persisted. Leaving the plantation, Fannie Lou traveled the South, working with the Civil Rights movement, teaching African Americans to read and helping them register to vote. One day, on her way back from a literacy workshop, Fannie Lou was arrested on false charges and jailed. In jail, police beat Fannie Lou to within an inch of her life with a blackjack. It took Fannie Lou more than a month to recover, and the beating would scar her both mentally and physically.

But nevertheless, she persisted. Over the next decade, Fannie Lou Hamer took her fight

for the right to vote to the national party. From humble beginnings, she challenged the President of the United States, Members of Congress, the Democratic Party, and lawmakers at every level to confront the realities of racism in the United States and to build a democracy inclusive of all Americans.

Time and again, she faced violence and she faced institutions built on decades of racism. But nevertheless she persisted.

Today, I stand, not only to honor the courage and accomplishment of Fannie Lou Hamer, but to offer her story as inspiration to

the Americans today who are fighting to make our country a better place to live. As we work to turn back new discriminatory voting laws, as we speak out for a more affordable health care system for all Americans, as we take a stand on issues like police brutality, we must persist.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman THOMPSON for organizing Members today in honor of Fannie Lou Hamer. We can never allow her work or her legacy to be forgotten.