

regime had sentenced me to death and actually has executed 67 members of my family and relatives. And I can feel the bitterness of the loss when someone loses a dear member of his family, a son or a spouse.

When blood mixes together in the field, aiming to achieve one goal, this blood will help in establishing long-lasting relationship between us. Our relationship will stay forever.

Terrorists still carry out, on daily basis, these crazy actions against innocent civilians: their suicide bombs, their car bombs against the innocent civilians who have nothing to do with the conflict in Iraq. They want to kill democracy as they kill humans. But they will definitely fail, because we are committed to success, and we are committed to democracy. And the daily killing does not prevent Iraqis from carrying out and going along with their daily lives. And we are confident that we will succeed, because you and people like you are helping us to confront terrorism—terrorism that is spreading in our land—with foreign support.

Lastly, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Iraqi people, I would like to thank you and thank your families. I would like to appreciate your losses, your sacrifices, appreciate the bitterness of those who have lost loved ones. I hope that you can go past your losses, and I hope that you can compensate it with—compensate it about what's happened.

And we feel pain and sorrow for every drop of blood that falls in Iraq. But once again, we give you all the salute—we salute you, and we thank you very much for all that you've offered to Iraq.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Fort Belvoir Community Club. In his remarks, he referred to Iraq's Ambassador to the U.S. Samir Shakir al-Sumaydi; Col. Brian W. Lauritzen, USA, garrison commander, Ft. Belvoir; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation Expanding American Homeownership

July 26, 2006

I am pleased the House passed the "Expanding American Homeownership Act of 2006."

The Federal Housing Administration has helped millions of Americans become homeowners in communities throughout our country. I appreciate the House's efforts to modernize this important program to ensure that it reflects the demands of today's marketplace and addresses the current needs of potential home buyers. By

providing the FHA with increased flexibility for mortgage downpayment requirements and the authority to tailor financing to suit a family's unique situation, this bill will improve FHA's ability to help lower and moderate-income families achieve the American Dream.

I encourage the Senate to join the House and pass this critical legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5121.

Remarks on Signing the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006

July 27, 2006

Thank you. Good morning. Welcome. Thanks for being here on this special day. Please be seated. America began with a declaration that all men are created equal. This declaration marked a tremendous advance in the story of freedom, yet it also contained a contradiction: Some of the same men who signed their names to this self-evident truth owned other men as property. By reauthorizing this act, Congress has reaffirmed its belief that all men are created equal, its belief that the new founding started by the signing of the bill by President Johnson is worthy of our great Nation to continue.

I'm proud to be here with our Attorney General, members of my Cabinet, leaders of the United States Senate and House of Representatives. I thank the bill sponsors. I thank the members of the Judiciary Committee. I appreciate so very much representatives of the Hamer family who have joined us, representatives of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute who have joined us, and members of the King family, in particular Reverend Bernice King and Martin Luther King. Thank you all for coming.

I'm honored to be here with civil rights leaders like Dr. Dorothy Height, Julian Bond, the chairman of the NAACP. Bruce Gordon—thank you, Bruce. Reverend Lowery—it's good to see you again, sir—fortunately, I got the mike this time. *[Laughter]* I'm proud to be here with Marc Morial. Thanks for coming, Marc. Juanita Abernathy is with us today. Jesse Jackson—good to see you, Jesse. Al Sharpton, Dr. Benjamin Hooks and Frances are with us. A lot of other folks who care deeply about this issue, we welcome you here.

It's good to welcome the mayor. Mr. Mayor, good to see you. Thanks for coming—Tony Williams. Everything is fine in the neighborhood; I appreciate it. *[Laugh-*

ter] And the mayor of Selma, Alabama, James Perkins, is with us. Mr. Mayor, proud you're here. Welcome, sir.

The right of ordinary men and women to determine their own political future lies at the heart of the American experiment, and it is a right that has been won by the sacrifice of patriots. The Declaration of Independence was born on the stand for liberty taken at Lexington and Concord. The amendments to our Constitution that outlawed slavery and guaranteed the right to vote came at the price of a terrible civil war.

The Voting Rights Act that broke the segregationist lock on the ballot box rose from the courage shown on a Selma bridge one Sunday afternoon in March of 1965. On that day, African Americans, including a Member of the United States Congress, John Lewis, marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in a protest intended to highlight the unfair practices that kept them off the voter rolls.

The brutal response showed America why a march was necessary. When the marchers reached the far side of the bridge, they were met by State troopers and civilian posse bearing billy clubs and whips, weapons they did not hesitate to use. The images of policemen using night sticks on peaceful protesters were carried on television screens across the country, and they stung the conscience of a slumbering America.

One week after Selma, President Lyndon Johnson took to the airwaves to announce that he planned to submit legislation that would bring African Americans into the civic life of our Nation. Five months after Selma, he signed the Voting Rights Act into law in the rotunda of our Nation's Capitol. In a little more than a year after Selma, a newly enfranchised black community used