

continue in effect for 1 year beyond August 17, 2015.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

## The President's Weekly Address

*August 8, 2015*

Hi, everybody. The right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights of any democracy. Yet, for too long, too many of our fellow citizens were denied that right, simply because of the color of their skin.

Fifty years ago this week, President Lyndon Johnson signed a law to change that. The Voting Rights Act broke down legal barriers that stood between millions of African Americans and their constitutional right to cast a ballot. It was and still is one of the greatest victories in our country's struggle for civil rights.

But it didn't happen overnight. Countless men and women marched and organized, sat in and stood up, for our most basic rights. For this they were called agitators and un-American; they were jailed, and they were beaten. Some were even killed. But in the end, they reaffirmed the idea at the very heart of America: that people who love this country can change it.

Our country is a better place because of all those heroes did for us. But as one of those heroes, Congressman John Lewis, reminded us in Selma this past March, "There is still work to be done." Fifty years after the Voting Rights Act, there are still too many barriers to vote and too many people trying to erect new ones. We've seen laws that roll back early voting, force people to jump through hoops to cast a ballot, or lead to legitimate voters being improperly purged from the rolls. Over the years,

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

we've seen provisions specifically designed to make it harder for some of our fellow citizens to vote. In a democracy like ours, with a history like ours, that's a disgrace.

That's why, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, I'm calling on Congress to pass new legislation to make sure every American has equal access to the polls. It's why I support the organizers getting folks registered in their communities. And it's why, no matter what party you support, my message to every American is simple: Get out there and vote, not just every 4 years, but every chance you get. Because your elected officials will only heed your voice if you make your voice heard.

The promise that all of us are created equal is written into our founding documents, but it's up to us to make that promise real. Together, let's do what Americans have always done: Let's keep marching forward, keep perfecting our Union, and keep building a better country for our kids.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on August 7 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 8.

## Statement on the Health of Former President Jimmy Carter

*August 12, 2015*

Michelle and I send our best wishes to President Carter for a fast and full recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with Rosalynn and the

entire Carter family as they face this challenge with the same grace and determination that they have shown so many times before. Jimmy,