

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7820

To establish the John Lewis Election Day holiday on November 3, 2020,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2020

Mrs. BEATTY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To establish the John Lewis Election Day holiday on
November 3, 2020, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Congressman John R.
5 Lewis Election Day Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) John Robert Lewis was born on February
9 21, 1940, near Troy, Alabama, the son of share-
10 croppers in the segregated South.

1 (2) Lewis was ordained as a Baptist minister
2 after graduating from the American Baptist Theo-
3 logical Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, and re-
4 ceived a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy
5 from Fisk University.

6 (3) As a student, Lewis learned nonviolent civil
7 disobedience from the Reverend James Lawson and
8 participated in the Nashville Student Movement, or-
9 ganizing sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and
10 participating in other civil rights events.

11 (4) Lewis was one of the original 13 Freedom
12 Riders, who traveled through southern states in
13 1961 to pressure the enforcement of the Boynton v.
14 Virginia Supreme Court case that declared seg-
15 regated interstate bus travel unconstitutional.

16 (5) As a Freedom Rider, Lewis was—

17 (A) assaulted while attempting to enter a
18 Whites-only waiting room in Rock Hill, South
19 Carolina;

20 (B) on a bus that was fire-bombed by the
21 Ku Klux Klan outside Anniston, Alabama;

22 (C) among the Freedom Riders beaten
23 with bats, pipes, and chains in Birmingham,
24 Alabama;

1 (D) hit in the head and left bleeding and
2 unconscious outside a Greyhound bus station in
3 Montgomery, Alabama; and

4 (E) imprisoned several times and spent a
5 month in the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

6 (6) Lewis was a founding member of the Stu-
7 dent Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
8 and was elected its chair in 1963, serving until
9 1966.

10 (7) Lewis was the youngest of the “Big Six”
11 leaders to organize the 1963 March on Washington
12 for Jobs and Freedom and spoke to the crowd of
13 over 200,000 from the steps of the Lincoln Memo-
14 rial.

15 (8) During Lewis’s tenure as chair, the SNCC
16 organized the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer
17 campaign to register Black voters.

18 (9) Lewis and fellow activist Hosea Williams
19 led over 600 marchers over the Edmund Pettus
20 Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965. The
21 marchers were tear gassed and beaten by the Ala-
22 bama State Police. Lewis had his skull fractured by
23 an Alabama State trooper’s nightstick. The day be-
24 came known as Bloody Sunday and inspired nation-

1 wide support leading to the enactment of the Voting
2 Rights Act of 1965.

3 (10) Between 1960 and 1966, Lewis was ar-
4 rested 40 times as a nonviolent protestor for equal
5 justice.

6 (11) Lewis became the director of the Voter
7 Education Project in 1970, which added millions of
8 minority voters to the rolls during his tenure.

9 (12) President Jimmy Carter appointed Lewis
10 to direct ACTION, the Federal agency overseeing
11 more than 250,000 volunteers, in 1977.

12 (13) Lewis was first elected to the House of
13 Representatives in 1986, representing Georgia's 5th
14 Congressional District.

15 (14) During his 17 terms in the House of Rep-
16 resentatives, Lewis became known as the "Con-
17 science of the Congress," and was a stalwart cham-
18 pion for equality and justice.

19 (15) Among the numerous honors and awards
20 bestowed on him, Lewis received the Presidential
21 Medal of Freedom from President Obama in 2010.

22 (16) Lewis passed away on July 17, 2020, at
23 the age of 80 and lay in state in the United States
24 Capitol Rotunda.

1 (17) Lewis advised: “Do not get lost in a sea
2 of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is
3 not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a
4 year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be
5 afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble,
6 necessary trouble.”.

7 **SEC. 3. JOHN LEWIS ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY.**

8 For purposes of any law relating to Federal employ-
9 ment, November 3, 2020, shall be a legal public holiday,
10 to be known and designated as “John Lewis Election
11 Day”, described in section 6103 of title 5, United States
12 Code.

13 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING TREATMENT OF**
14 **DAY BY PRIVATE EMPLOYERS.**

15 It is the sense of Congress that private employers in
16 the United States should give their employees the day off
17 on November 3, 2020, to enable the employees to cast
18 votes in the elections held on that day and to honor the
19 life and legacy of John Lewis.

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