

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1114

Expressing support for the designation of the month of September as
“National Voting Rights Month”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

Mr. VEASEY (for himself, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. GRIJALVA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, Intelligence (Permanent Select), Oversight and Reform, Science, Space, and Technology, Education and Labor, Ways and Means, Financial Services, Ethics, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of the month of
September as “National Voting Rights Month”.

Whereas voting is one of the single most important rights
that can be exercised in our democracy;

Whereas over the course of history, various voter suppression
laws in the United States have hindered, and even pro-
hibited, certain individuals and groups from exercising
this right;

Whereas during the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Na-
tive Americans and Americans who were born abroad,
many individuals who did not speak or write English, and

many who were formerly subjected to slavery, were denied full citizenship and prevented from voting by English literacy tests;

Whereas since the 1870s, minority groups such as African Americans in the South suffered from the oppressive effects of Jim Crow laws designed to prevent political, economic, and social mobility;

Whereas African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other underrepresented groups were subject to violence, poll taxes, literacy tests, all-White primaries, property ownership tests, and grandfather clauses that sought to suppress their right to vote;

Whereas members of the aforementioned groups and others are currently, in some cases, subject to intimidation, voter roll purges, bans on former prisoners from voting, and financial barriers that act effectively as modern day poll taxes;

Whereas in 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to protect the rights of African Americans and other traditionally disenfranchised groups to vote, among other reasons;

Whereas in 2013, in the landmark *Shelby County v. Holder* case, the Supreme Court invalidated section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, dismantling the preclearance provision in the law that protected voters in States and units of local governments that historically have suppressed the rights of minorities to vote;

Whereas since the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have been vacated, among other effects, many States' gerrymandered districts have gone

unchallenged or have become less likely to be invalidated by the courts;

Whereas these gerrymandered districts have been found to have a discriminatory impact on traditionally disenfranchised minorities through tactics that include “cracking”, diluting their voting power across many districts, and “packing”, concentrating minority voters’ power in one district to reduce their voting power in other districts;

Whereas the courts have found the congressional and, in some cases, State legislative district maps in Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Wisconsin, and other States to be gerrymandered districts that were created to favor some groups over others;

Whereas the Shelby County v. Holder Supreme Court decision calls on Congress to update the formula in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to better match current data;

Whereas in at least 23 States, some form of restrictive voting law has been instituted since 2013;

Whereas these restrictive voting laws encompass cutbacks in early voting, voter roll purges, placement of faulty equipment in minority communities, requirement of photo identification, and elimination of same-day registration;

Whereas these policies could outright disenfranchise or make voting much more difficult for more than 80 million minority, elderly, poor, and disabled voters, among other groups;

Whereas in 2016 alone, discriminatory laws in North Carolina, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Texas were ruled to violate voters’ rights and were overturned by the courts;

Whereas the COVID–19 public health emergency has only exacerbated the state of elections and voters’ access to the ballot;

Whereas the lack of fair and safe election policies threaten minority communities, which have been disproportionately impacted and disenfranchised due to the COVID–19 pandemic, and their access to the ballot;

Whereas tackling the challenges of administrating upcoming elections requires increasing the accessibility of vote-by-mail and other limited contact options to ensure the protection of voters’ health and safety amid a global pandemic;

Whereas as voting by mail becomes a safer and a more accessible option for voters to exercise their Constitutional right to vote during these unprecedented times, a fully functional and reliable United States Postal Service is of paramount importance in successfully conducting elections;

Whereas Congress must work to combat any attempts to dismantle or underfund the United States Postal Service and thereby obstruct the passage of the mail as blatant tactics of voter suppression and election interference;

Whereas there is much more work to be done to ensure all Americans have the right to vote through free, fair, and accessible elections;

Whereas National Voter Registration Day is September 22;
and

Whereas the month of September would be an appropriate month to designate as “National Voting Rights Month” and ensure our democracy includes all of us through the

registration of voters and awareness of elections: Now,
therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Vot-
3 ing Rights Month”;

4 (2) encourages all people in the United States
5 to uphold the right of every American to exercise his
6 or her sacred and fundamental right to vote;

7 (3) commemorates the 100th anniversary of the
8 House passage of the 19th Amendment, which guar-
9 anteed women the right to vote, and the legacy of
10 generations of suffragists that fought to protect
11 women’s rights at the ballot;

12 (4) encourages Congress to pass—

13 (A) H.R. 1 (S. 949), the For the People
14 Act of 2019, to increase voters’ access to the
15 ballot, end gerrymandering, create automatic
16 voter registration, limit the power of restrictive
17 voter ID laws, make critical investments in elec-
18 tion infrastructure and technology, and address
19 corruption in campaign finance and ethics;

20 (B) H.R. 4 (S. 4263), the John R. Lewis
21 Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2020, to re-
22 store the protections of the Voting Rights Act
23 of 1965 that prohibit discriminatory voting
24 practices, remove barriers to voting, and pro-

1 vide protections for minority voters in States
2 with a history of voting discrimination;

3 (C) H.R. 7427, the ACCESS Act, to en-
4 sure every eligible American voter is able to ex-
5 ercise their right to vote safely and securely
6 during a declared state of emergency by guar-
7 anteeing no-excuse absentee voting, expanding
8 early voting, requiring state emergency plan-
9 ning for voting during a state of emergency,
10 mandating emergency vote-by-mail and same-
11 day voter registration, and accommodations for
12 voters on Indian lands;

13 (D) H.R. 8015 (S. 4527), the Delivering
14 for America Act, to prohibit the United States
15 Postal Services from making changes to oper-
16 ations or levels of service from those that were
17 in effect on January 1, 2020, establish require-
18 ments for the processing of election mail, and
19 provide additional funding for the Postal Serv-
20 ice Fund;

21 (E) H.R. 2722, the Securing America's
22 Federal Elections (SAFE) Act, to provide fund-
23 ing for States to improve the administration of
24 elections, including enhancement of technology,
25 election security, replacing antiquated voting

1 systems, and meeting new standards for admin-
2 istering elections; and

3 (F) other voting rights legislation that
4 seeks to advance voting rights and protect
5 United States elections;

6 (5) recommends that our Nation's public
7 schools and universities develop an academic cur-
8 riculum under which students would learn about the
9 importance of voting, how to register to vote, where
10 to vote, and the different forms of voting; in addi-
11 tion to teaching the history of voter suppression in
12 America before and after the Voting Rights Act of
13 1965, and current measures that have been passed
14 to restrict the vote;

15 (6) encourages the Postal Service to issue a
16 special John Lewis stamp during the month of Sep-
17 tember to honor his life and legacy and commitment
18 to voting rights, and to remind Americans about
19 how ordinary citizens risked their lives, marched,
20 and participated in our great democracy so all
21 Americans would have the fundamental right to vote;
22 and

23 (7) invites Congress to allocate the requisite
24 funds needed for public service announcements on
25 television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social

1 media, billboards, buses, and other forms of media
2 to remind Americans when elections are being held,
3 share important registration deadlines, and to urge
4 people to get out and vote.

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