

that are being undertaken in Iraq are real projects. They really help people. Those inoculations really do save babies, and it is something that we can be very proud of.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. McCOTTER.

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Armed Services for recognizing a lowly member of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would just tell the gentleman that he is a very articulate member of the Committee on International Relations. We would not think of not recognizing him.

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, hopefully, we do a better job of talking so my colleagues have to do less cleaning up of our messes.

I just wanted to take a moment to talk about the President's speech in front of the United Nations, especially in relation to the horrific events that we have seen in Iraq. I think it is very important that we see that we have two messages, deeply distinct, that are being aimed at the hearts of the world and our fellow Americans. On the one hand, we have the President of the United States standing in front of the United Nations General Assembly and reaffirming this Nation's commitment to democracy, to liberty and to hope throughout the world. On the other hand, we have terrorists who, despite whatever political rationale they put forward, are nothing short of murderers who offer a perpetuation of evil and horror for their fellow human beings.

It would seem to me today that nothing could more show the stakes in Iraq, because, despite the panaceas that are proffered by many politicians, Iraq has two futures. Iraq will be a democracy, or Iraq will belong to Zarqawi. No amount of international support that is promised will materialize. It is up to the Iraqi people and America's coalition partners to ensure that Iraq remains free from any tyrant, especially the tyrants of terror that are currently exerting their will in some pockets of the country.

I bring this up because it is important for us here at home to realize that the gravest threat to the United States of America in the battle for Iraq is our resolve, as the President has rightly said. For, as it has been noted often, the war on terror is fought as much on a map as it is on your mind as a civilian. The images that we see, the actions that are put forward are designed to terrorize us. And they are designed to terrorize us so that we can no longer think clearly or rationally about the situation in Iraq. It is designed so that a handful of evil people can try to obscure the fact that tens of millions of Iraqi people are living daily lives and are trying to build a country and a better future for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, a terrorist attack by one suicide bomber that blows up 47

people standing in line to join in the defense of their country and the promotion of their future, the story there is not the terrorists, the suicide, the foreign terrorists destroying innocent life; it is over 47 people in Iraq were killed to stand in line to defend their freedom, to fight for a better future for themselves and their children. And they will keep standing in line, and they will keep coming. That is the story. It is the resiliency of the Iraqi people, not the evil of the terrorists who wish to subjugate them once again and turn Iraq back into a haven for terrorists.

It is the terror that will preclude us from seeing that stark reality, the reality that we need to see, the reality that the gentleman from Georgia talked about, the historical examples that have been put forward by the gentleman from Utah, the rational thought that is required of us as policymakers and as people of this Nation to understand not only the stakes but the situation.

As we go forward and as the world looks and has a chance to reflect upon the message of the terrorists or the message of our President at the U.N., I think it is also necessary at this time for me to point out that, at the United Nations, many of those people in that General Assembly would not be sitting in those seats if their countries were free and democratic. So to all of those nations, be they free or democratic in the United Nations, regarding Iraq, I would just like them to ponder one thing. History may commend them for a reluctance to wage a war, but history will condemn them for their refusal to win the peace. And right now, those are the stakes.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk on this issue.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent remarks.

Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up here, I would like to go over the rotation of U.S. forces in Iraq because, once again, the presidential candidate Senator KERRY has alleged that there is some secret plan to bring up a lot more people after the November elections, and I have a letter from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Myers, that says that there is no secret plan.

□ 2230

He states that there has been no deferences of any notices of the rotations in Iraq as a function of pressure from anybody. Once more, let me go over the units that have moved in on the last rotation and the units that will move in on the next rotation.

We had the First Airborne Division or the 101st Airborne Division in Northern Iraq, that has been replaced now by the First Striker Brigade up in the Mosul area. We had the Fourth Infantry Division in eastern Iraq centered in the Tikrit area. And that Fourth Infantry Division has been replaced by the First Infantry Division.

We had the 82nd Airborne in the western area of operations that goes all the way to the Syrian border. That has been replaced by the First Marine Expeditionary Force, made up primarily of the First Marine Division.

We had the First Armored Division in Baghdad. Part of its elements have been replaced by the First Cavalry Division. And we are going to be going to a new rotation that was briefed to us in July with plenty of time, plenty of advance notice and plenty of publicity to the world. I do not know if Senator KERRY saw it, but it certainly was not secret. It was on national television, and that rotation is manifested in the second chart.

That shows the Striker Brigade that is in northern Iraq presently being replaced by another Striker brigade. It shows the First Infantry Division in the eastern sector being replaced by the 42nd Infantry Division. It shows the First Cav and the First Armored Division being replaced by the Third Infantry Division, and the Tenth Mountain Brigade, and it shows the First Armored Division moving out and the First Cavalry Division moving out.

So that is the rotation with respect to Reserves. The ratio of Reserves to active forces will remain in the 35 to 40 percent range, and there are 5,600 members of the individual ready reserve. That number has already been laid out by the Pentagon and those people are in particular specialties, 800 of them have been called up. More will be called up as time goes on. And in November or December there will be another blue print because there is a blueprint laid down every 180 days, and it will maintain approximately the same number of people, 135,000 to 140,000 personnel in Iraq. And it will maintain approximately the same Reserve to active duty proportion.

So that is the game plan that has been laid out in front of the entire Nation by DOD. There has not been any attempt to hide it, to delay it, to wait for the election before they laid it out. And in another 4 or 5 months they will lay out the next 180-day plan, and 180 days from then they will lay out the next plan.

That is the means of notifying the country so that units and individual families and personnel in the armed services can have plenty of notice.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS AND THE PENDING ELECTION

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for half the time to midnight, or 43 minutes.

MS. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand this evening to continue the Congressional Black Caucus Special Orders and discussion with our colleagues on the pending election that will be held this year on November 2, 2004; to speak to my colleagues about

the absolute imperative need to educate America and to be able to be diligent on what we fear to be episodes of attempts to suppress voting all over the Nation.

As I listened to my colleagues who preceded me on the floor of the House, I believe it is important to share some thoughts about the dilemma we find ourselves in. It may even be the engine behind the selection on November 2, 2004.

All of us have recognized the bravery and the valiant efforts, sacrifices that have been made by our friends and neighbors who find themselves in Afghanistan and Iraq. In my community alone, it is not only the enlisted personnel but it is likewise the Texas National Guard, the Reservists and many, many civilians.

We came to where we are today on different pathways. Some of us voted to authorize the authority to go to war, and many of us, such as myself, were adamant that this was the wrong direction to take. In the course of this debate, none of us, however, have taken to the task of criticizing or not recognizing the valor of our troops. And tonight I continue that position, to respect them and thank them, and to apologize to those families and to offer them sympathy, for those families whose brave men and women have already lost their lives.

One thing about this Nation is that we are eager to rise to the occasion to defend this Nation's honor. We were eager to defend America after the horrific tragedy of 9/11. And as I began, I started out by speaking to the question of voter suppression and the rights of voters, and I wanted to mention the tragedies in Iraq, as I have mentioned the tragedy on 9/11, because I think it all comes to the point of the American people finally making the decision of the direction they want this Nation to go.

In the last 48 hours or a week ago some 80-plus people were killed in Baghdad. There is no doubt that in the last weekend it was one of the bloodiest weekends that we have experienced. We know that three hostages were held. We know that Americans were held. We know that families in America today are mourning the loss of their loved ones who were beheaded in the last 48 hours.

We also know that this administration, the Secretary of Defense, and those responsible for the policy of this war, or the lack of policy, have not offered one solution, one suggestion of how we can return from Iraq with honor. There is suggestion, of course, that there will be an election in Iraq in January and one pending in Afghanistan. We took away the resources from Afghanistan and the support for President Karzai to be distracted by a war directed and called for by this administration which today we find out was on a truly false basis. That is why this election is one of extreme importance. As many have said, it may be the most

historic election, the most important election of our lifetime.

So I think it begs the question that we can come on the floor and pay tribute to those brave young men and women, but we have to tell the truth. There is a complete disaster in Iraq. There is complete pillage and murder and brutality and violence and explosions and loss of life and continued loss of life of those who we have sent to be on the front lines and who have been willing to take the oath to stand up and defend America.

Whose obligation is it? It is those of us who were elected. The President of the United States has to stand before the American people with a solution that will allow our men and women to return with honor. They have to in fact recognize that there must be action. In the President's remarks to the United Nations I did not hear a response to Senator KERRY's very provocative and important and instructive and meaningful statement on yesterday morning about solutions, calling together all of the allies that were in New York to help assist them or help to have assistance in working with Iraq, provide better training for Iraqi security forces, provide benefits to the Iraqi people, allow more Iraqi people to in fact engage in the rebuilding of Iraq, and as well ensure that democratic elections can be held next year. Actions, a statement of actions.

I bring this to the attention of my colleagues because the Congressional Black Caucus has been consistent in asking for some orderly response to a war that was called on the basis of weapons of mass destruction, called on the basis of imminent threat to the United States, called on the basis of a connection to al Qaeda, none of which are true. We simply asked for the truth. And so we continue with that message and we build on it because as we move towards the elections, we are likewise concerned with the people of the United States, and it is our commitment to ensure because this election is so important and it will be the telling story of how we move forward in Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, Indonesia, and the war on terror. We cannot afford for one single vote to be lost.

As I mentioned, the speech that was given by Senator KERRY, I perused some of the newspapers today because when we speak about voter suppression, many times it is thought that we speak about one group versus another. Yes, the Voter Rights Act of 1965 covered Southern States and protects the rights of African Americans and Hispanics in protecting them from being denied the right to vote. I might say that even with those laws, we had a tumultuous time in 2004. But I thought I would just show to my colleagues why I am standing here today, standing against voter suppression for any American.

As I read the Wall Street Journal, I am looking at both Alina and Paul Shipman, and the article talks about

the anatomy of a hospital bill. There are people spending \$29,000 because they do not have any insurance. That is what is going on in America, and that is why this election is so very important.

Or maybe we want to read the Los Angeles Times and look at a picture that shows somewhat of traffic congestion that is all over America because we need more transportation dollars and resources to improve our mobility. We need dollars to fix our bridges, to support our rail and our bus and our airplanes and our airports and our neighborhoods where there is extreme noise from our airports. We need dollars invested in America.

Then I show this last picture of Marita Michael, who testified in Washington, D.C. against the effort by this Congress to repeal the assault weapons ban in D.C. after she lost her young beloved son of 15 years old by gunshot.

This is why this election is so very important, and this is why we cannot afford to be denied the right to vote. And as I remind those, let me say that this is not a frivolous discussion, because even today we are finding out that we are going to have a tough time in this election, even in the backdrop of the legislation passed in 2002, the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which I will discuss later as I see my colleague has joined me, even as we have that legislation or the legislation of Senator DODD in 2001 that would have created the Equal Protection of Voting Rights Act of 2001, primarily because we are still facing the challenges of an election that can be tampered with.

Let me cite two or three points as I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON), but I think it is important to set the groundwork. The reason why we are on the floor of the House is because there are families paying \$30,000 for hospitalization because they have no health insurance.

There are people trying to get to work and trying to develop jobs, and they are immobilized by traffic conditions that do not allow the free ingress and egress because we are stalemated in this Congress because so many dollars are going overseas to fight the war in Iraq. And there is no solution it appears, no pronouncement from this administration, no relief to these families who are longing, no relief to these individuals who are serving us, no understanding whether they will be able to come home or not.

Mr. Speaker, I was in the airport over the weekend, and I saw a number of our men and women who had come home for some time frame; and I stopped to thank them for their service and asked them how long they would be home. Some I hoped were coming home for good, but do you know what they said to me, Mr. Speaker? We have got 15 days and then we go back.

□ 2245

These are men and women who cannot be told when we are going to have

a resolution in Iraq, when we are going to transfer, if you will, the security aspects of Iraq to the people who should be securing their own country.

No one is suggesting that we cut and run, but we are suggesting that there be a statement, a pronouncement that there is a solution and that this administration knows the direction in which it goes.

So, again, this is an important election and just to remind you why it is important, why the Voting Rights Act is important and this election law is important, because even in the last election in Florida, there was the use of armed, plainclothes officers from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to question elderly black voters in their homes and senior citizens' homes, the easiest persons to intimidate. The incidents were part of a State investigation of voting irregularities in the city's March 2003 mayoral election. Let me share with you one other aspect.

This year in Florida the State ordered the implementation of the potential felon purge list to remove voters from the rolls. That in itself was chilling, in a disturbing echo of the infamous 2000 purge which was found to be patently incorrect and egregiously wrong, suggesting that people who came to the polls in 2000 were felons when they were not.

In 2000, thousands of eligible voters, particularly African Americans, were removed from the rolls. After an outcry of the people in Florida and those around the country, the State abandoned the plan, after the news media investigations revealed that the 2004 list also included thousands of people who were eligible to vote and heavily targeted African Americans, while virtually ignoring many other voters.

Then lastly, Mr. Speaker, this is in a southern State protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and 1968. In 2002 in Louisiana, flyers were distributed in African American communities telling voters they could go to the polls on Tuesday, December 10. Mr. Speaker, they also added that if they could not go, they could go this Tuesday, December 10, excuse me, 3 days after a Senate run-off election was held. Let me go over that again. They sent flyers out to tell the African American voters that they could vote Tuesday, December 10, which was actually 3 days past the election date that they should have showed up at. This is the kind of underhanded, almost insulting, but really threatening to the Constitution, actions that have gone on before by those who would want to turn away voters who disagree with them.

So that is why we stand here today, and I am delighted to yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) who has been a strong voice on the issues of voter suppression and a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the gentle-

woman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for yielding to me and for the Caucus for organizing this important discussion on voter intimidation and suppression in the United States.

In a Nation where children are taught at the earliest age that every citizen has the right to vote, it would be comforting to know that the last vestiges of voter intimidation, oppression and suppression have been swept away by the passage and the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The facts, however, are disconcerting.

In every national election since reconstruction, in every election since the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965, voters, and particularly African Americans and other minorities, have faced calculated and determined efforts at intimidation and suppression, both above and below the Mason Dixon line, from California to Maine to Texas to Montana.

Overt, and often violent, voter participation in the era of Jim Crow now has been replaced by more subtle, but often just as intimidating, tactics. Gone are the days of poll taxes and literacy tests. Today, intimidation, threats, innuendo and deception are often more used to discourage voter turnout.

The list of strategies used by those who wish to suppress or intimidate voters is indeed varied and includes the following: challenges and threats against individual voters at the polls by armed private guards, off duty law enforcement officers, local creditors, fake poll monitors and poll workers and managers; signs posted at polling places warning of penalties for voter fraud and non-citizen voting or illegally urging support for a candidate; poll workers assisting voters in filling out their ballots and instructing them on how to vote; criminal tampering with voter registration rolls and records; flyer and radio advertisements containing false information; roadblocks placed near polling places; and internal memos from party officials in which the goals of suppressing voter turnout are outlined.

Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming evidence of widespread voter intimidation and suppression in our Nation and the fact that the presidential election of 2004 promises to be as close as the 2000 election, when every vote did count but was not counted, prompted me to draft a resolution condemning all efforts to suppress and intimidate voters in the United States and affirming that the right to vote is a fundamental right of all eligible United States citizens.

The resolution also urges States to replace decades-old election machinery with less error-prone equipment before the November 2004 national elections. It calls upon all States to institute a moratorium on the erection of roadblocks or identity checkpoints designed to racially profile or intimidate voters on election day.

Mr. Speaker, I saw this happening when I was the ambassador to Micro-

nesia, thousands of miles away and watching on CNN. I was horrified that my country would see on election day these kinds of racially-profiled activities that were intended to stop the person of color from voting. I was horrified and ashamed.

My resolution calls upon the Attorney General to vigorously monitor and investigate all credible allegations of voter intimidation and suppression and to expeditiously prosecute all offenders to the full extent of the law.

Mr. Speaker, all of us here today are very aware of the voter irregularities that took place in Florida during the 2000 election. We are very aware that every vote does count and that in 2000 perhaps as little as 600 votes separated the two presidential candidates.

We are also aware that many of the votes in Florida were disqualified due to antiquated voting machines used predominantly in minority neighborhoods. While just 11 percent of Florida's voters are African American, more than half of the spoiled ballots, that is, more than 90,000 of the votes tossed out, were cast by African Americans.

We are also aware of other unsettling events, one of which was conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in Orlando this summer. In that investigation, elderly African American voters were visited at their homes by law enforcement officers, curious about their voting behavior. Florida officials deny any attempt to intimidate voters. However, the Justice Department recently disclosed that it had initiated a civil rights investigation into what had occurred in Orlando.

The recent event in Florida follows on the heels of two other well-publicized events in Florida when in 2001 State officials attempted to purge its list of alleged felons, predominantly African Americans, and in 2004, when the State again attempted to purge its voter list.

Mr. Speaker, I, along with my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus, come to the floor of this House this evening to declare that never again will such acts of voter intimidation and suppression be used. It is high time for both parties to sign a mutual pledge to renounce any and all efforts to suppress the vote in this upcoming election.

The world will be watching our Nation on the eve of November 2. As we go into other Nations and the United Nations talking about liberty and democracy, we cannot be hypocritical. Not only will the Western world be watching, but the non-Western, and particularly the Arab, world will be following the election. If we intend to bring liberty to Iraq and any other country, we must model that behavior here at home.

So I want to show the world how democracy should be practiced, not how it should not, and as a person whose roots are on the continent of Africa, no

longer will we be suppressed or intimidated because our skins are black.

I am an American. I have been an American ambassador. I have a right to vote, and no one should stop me or mine from exercising that right.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman, and I am very honored, as any Member of the Congressional Black Caucus and Member of this body, to join the gentlewoman on this very important legislation to eliminate voter suppression.

The gentlewoman's chronicling the indictments of our various election systems is very important to educate our colleagues because many times it is thought that with the passage of legislation, and as you well know, we worked very hard to craft the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

Mr. Speaker, since this legislation, we are chronicling this list of indictments against the various election systems throughout the country. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 will be 40-years-old in about 6- to 8-months, and look at us. We are standing here talking about voter suppression. This is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and I want to make sure that we are mentioning my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and our chairperson, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) because, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to coming to this floor as often as it is needed to be able to educate our colleagues and to encourage you to join with us in supporting this resolution.

This resolution should be bipartisan and unanimous. Not one of us should be interested in suppressing the votes of someone like Ms. Michael who wanted to express herself in Washington, D.C., about the assault weapons ban.

□ 2300

She needs to be able to vote. No one should want to suppress the votes of thousands upon thousands of Americans who are stuck in traffic because we have not been able to focus on the investment in transportation in America. And certainly none of us should want to be able to stifle the votes of the 44 million uninsured, who like this family, the Shipman family, are paying enormous hospital bills, maybe even more than this, \$30,000.

The votes are important, but it makes me very sad when I can cite instances that occur today that go back to 1880 and 1910. For example, Florida adopted literacy tests, property qualifications, grandfather clauses which permitted an individual to vote only if his grandfather had thereby excluded the descendants of slaves.

Mr. Speaker, I want to engage with the gentlewoman from California as I put this forward. We are thinking that we have moved beyond this. In fact, let me say that one of the good news stories coming out of this is that we are going to be prepared. People for the American way, the Voters Institute,

the NAACP, the National Urban League, and many other groups are coming together to say loudly to America that we will not tolerate the denial of a vote and a vote not being counted.

Mr. Speaker, we expect to have some 10,000 or more lawyers, and we are recruiting them now. And if it is within the ethical posture, I hope those who are listening to my voice and who desire to be part of democracy and the privilege of voting and the rights of people voting would be in contact with these organizations and the Congressional Black Caucus regarding their desires, as legal scholars, to participate in protecting the rights of Americans so that votes will not be denied.

We have the right for provisional voting, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you what is happening. We are intimidating people from using provisional voting. Just this weekend we came from Ohio, my good friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), a great leader in that State, invited some of us in to survey the procedures and to look at the opportunities and the structures for voting in Ohio. Lo and behold, we had one of their State officials suggesting restrictions on provisional voting. We will join with the gentlewoman from Ohio in working to ensure that that does not happen. That is not what provisional voting says. It says that if you come to a voting booth and you believe you have the right to vote, you can sign an affidavit, you can provisionally vote, and your vote should be counted. This is intimidation, Mr. Speaker, nothing more, nothing less.

Then we find out, as we visited our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I hear my colleagues saluting them, and I join them in doing so, but we know the trouble we had with our military voting in 2000. Well, I am surprised and concerned that we do not have a clear understanding how overseas ballots from our military personnel will get to their respective hometowns to be counted.

Now, I understand, and we are looking into this, that these ballots are to be received by the Pentagon. What an intimidating aspect to a specialist P4, a person who is simply an enlisted person, doing their best, having to know that some officer may have the opportunity to look at their vote. Where is the right of privacy?

So to all those family members who have loved ones in the military, you need to be tuned in and ask the questions of your elected persons: How will my loved one, my son, my husband, my daughter, my wife, my family member's vote be counted and will it be secure?

Additionally, Florida's current lifetime ban on voting by convicted felons, which disenfranchised nearly a third of all black males during the 2000 elections, dates back to the reactionary measures implemented in the late 19th century. We still have laws today that deny those who have done their time,

paid their dues, who are denied the right to vote. We need a national legislative initiative, as we have ongoing in this Congress, to restore the rights of individuals who have paid their dues for the crime they have committed, and who are committed to being contributing citizens of this Nation. How dare we deny them their right to vote, and I hope we are able to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

What about local election officials who use the secret ballot law to take advantage of high illiteracy among blacks? Under the guise of protecting the integrity of the ballot, the State of Florida barred anyone from providing assistance to a voter, even if they could not read. Frankly, I think that we are clearly a Nation that has a long way to go.

I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), who I joined, along with a number of others, I know the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) did as well, with her international experience. We will have international observers, Mr. Speaker, and that is no shame to the United States. If we are a democracy that we are proud of, then we need international observers to affirm the fact that we have lived up to our own obligations, duties and values. We should not be denying those individuals who are uninsured, people stuck in traffic, who cannot get from a job that probably does not pay that much because we have no public transportation, a mother who is crying over her deceased son concerned about the assault weapons ban. They need to vote November 2nd, 2004, in the various early vote methods that areas may have.

We have a catastrophe here, and I encourage those who are concerned about this Constitution to consider voting one of your most precious rights. We expect that this century and this election, to be the first presidential election fully into the 21st century after the turn of this century, this election should set the standard that we are prepared for anyone who seeks public office. It should not matter whether we agree with their position, whether they are black or white or Hispanic, whether they are south Asian or Native American, whatever their diversity, we should not undermine voters because of who they are and because of who they desire to vote for.

Mr. Speaker, the election in 2000 was won actually in the popular vote by another person. This election cannot have that dichotomy. This is a solemn challenge for this House and for the other body. This is a solemn challenge for those of us who take an oath of office and rise every morning to pledge allegiance to our flag. This is an enormous burden that we now have.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am frightened, because of what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) said, a former ambassador, when she was not a Member of Congress in that 2000 election and the experience that she had. I

spent 30 days in Florida after that election. I spoke to Floridians, senior citizens who were frustrated by the fact that they did not get a chance to vote as they desired. There were county officials distorting the ballot that then distorted the results of the election. I had disabled persons coming to me after that election crying out that we should never have it happen again where a disabled person cannot vote in dignity with the privacy that is necessary.

So it is important that we come on the floor almost every night, because I do not believe this law, the Help America Vote Act, has really been implemented. Ask how many jurisdictions have the technology necessary to allow disabled persons to vote privately, Mr. Speaker. I want every disabled person to be aware that they can go to their county seat right now, whoever is in charge of elections, and demand they be able to vote privately and have the kind of procedures in place to do so. It is their constitutional right.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the work we have to do is yet undone; disabled persons, senior citizens and, yes, students. Students like the ones at Texas Prairie View A&M, who the district attorney told because they were students, they could not vote in the jurisdiction where they went to school. We are finding this happening all over America. The Constitution and the United States Supreme Court confirms that they can vote. The 1979 case that governed Prairie View A&M is applicable to students all over the country. Students can vote in the place of their school residency as long as they vote no place else. Let our voices be heard to all election officials who would even attempt to deny college students eligible to vote such as they did at Florida A&M, denying them the right to vote.

We believe elections should be guided by four fundamental principles: The voting process, particularly the voting systems in the administration of elections must be uniform and nondiscriminatory.

Voters must be able to independently and privately cast and verify their ballot. That is number two. That is the one we mentioned with respect to the disabled and senior citizens. No one who has a challenge of any kind should be intimidated and insulted and disgraced at the voting booth.

□ 2310

Number three, any voting system must comply with national certification standards.

And four, voter confidence and reliability in the electoral process must be maintained.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) for a question. She has crafted this resolution dealing with voter suppression. She comes from California. Many times we believe that these issues are only relegated to the southern States. I would like the gentlewoman to share some of the lan-

guage out of the resolution and the final resolve that says we are against voter suppression and intimidation because I hope, as we conclude our remarks tonight on the floor of the House, that we will be moving this legislation as quickly as possible because we cannot have in the 21st century the long shadow of Jim Crow. We cannot have the taking away of votes and the undercounting of votes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), and I appreciate the gentlewoman's passionate expression of the right to vote. That undergirds the reason why I introduced a resolution.

I read in the paper last week that there was a gentleman in one of the States up north who said we must suppress the black vote because, as you know, blacks vote Democrat, and so we must find ways to suppress their getting to the polls. I was appalled and shocked that we are dealing with something that was outlawed, we thought, by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But we always have to be awakened to the facts and realities in which we live, that racism is not dead in this country; it just takes a different position, a different posture.

So despite the gains that we have made in securing our right to vote, new roadblocks have been successfully erected, including diluting the African-American vote by switching to an at-large election, preventing African-Americans from becoming candidates or obtaining office, voter fraud, the discriminatory selection of election officials, denying African-Americans access to precinct meetings and the harassment and outright exclusion of African-Americans from polling places.

And we know that, prior to the last election, there were notices sent out that said if the weather is bad, you do not have to vote on November, let us just use the 2nd, but you can vote on December 10. These are things that are occurring in today's atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I have put together a series of whereases in this resolution. What they do is document progress that has been made. I would like to read just one of them: Whereas voters in the United States, particularly African-Americans and other minorities, have faced calculated and determined efforts at voter intimidation and suppression in every national election since the reconstruction era.

An example of that was a few weeks ago in Florida where names were purged, but only names of African-Americans, and the person who was in charge, the secretary of state, said that the information gotten from the database on the census did not indicate whether Hispanics should be purged because they were considered to be white. If you have a Gonzalez and a Solis and a Menendez, that might make one question whether you have some Hispanics on this list. It is these kinds of calculated efforts that we want to do away with, and when I get back to my

district, I am going to contact my county bar association and ask if they will join in our efforts to be sure we have attorneys throughout this country who will be ready in a flash to go to court when we see these violations of the Voting Rights Act.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted for the gentlewoman to make that point. Let me quickly close by first of all thanking the gentlewoman and making mention of our chairperson, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), and say that all of us are going to engage our county bar associations, the bars of the respective communities who believe in the justice of voting, to work with us.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, the reason why, even with Native Americans in the South Dakota 2004 primary, they were prevented from voting and were challenged because they did not have photo IDs which were not required in that State. The State of Arizona is now looking to do that.

We see there is reason for us to raise up the Constitution on the idea of voting, the Voting Rights Act and the very privilege of voting. We are in trouble, and the fact we are in trouble, there is a crisis and a need for us to surround the Nation with the idea that we will not tolerate one single act of voter suppression.

I ask my colleagues to support enthusiastically the Watson resolution against voter suppression. I ask those who are listening to engage their county government. And finally, I ask that we look at all of the electronic voting machines because we will engage in lawsuits if necessary to have a paper trail to protect the votes that will be going into those electronic voting machines.

Today we spoke on voter suppression. We will continue to do so because it is the right of the American people. This election must be free, and we must stand for freedom, justice and equality.

Despite significant gains our Nation has made to secure the voting rights of all Americans, credible reports of voter intimidation and suppression demonstrate that this most fundamental democratic right remains a dream deferred for some Americans.

I have joined my colleague from California, Ms. WATSON in introducing a resolution condemning all efforts to suppress and intimidate voters in the United States.

This resolution reaffirms that voting is a fundamental right of all eligible United States citizens; urges States to replace decades-old election machinery with less error-prone equipment before the November 2004 national elections; calls upon States to institute a moratorium on the erection of roadblocks or identity checkpoints designed to racially profile or intimidate voters on election day; and calls upon the Attorney General to vigorously monitor and investigate all credible allegations of voter intimidation and suppression and to expeditiously prosecute all offenders to the fullest extent of the law.

As we all learned during the last national election, each individual vote counts. By most accounts, the upcoming presidential election

will again underscore the importance that votes are counted accurately and that every qualified voter is allowed to exercise his or her constitutional right.

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY—PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF VOTING IN 2004 AND BEYOND

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON VOTING SYSTEMS AND VOTER VERIFICATION

As the 2004 election approaches, there is significant concern among Americans that our voting system has not been sufficiently protected from a repeat of widespread disenfranchisement. New technologies require election officials to grapple with a complex set of interests, including accessibility for people with disabilities and sufficient security and accountability to prevent elections from being affected by equipment malfunction or tampering.

The enormous logistical difficulties facing state and local election officials in implementing the Help America Vote Act are compounded by limited resources and a lack of guidance from the federal government.

Preventing disaster on Election Day will require a public commitment from election officials at all levels of government—especially chief state election officials—as well as the resources to put in place equipment and procedures that will advance and protect the voting rights of all Americans.

Maintaining the integrity of our electoral process is critical to America's democratic institutions. Providing people with disabilities with the opportunity to vote in an independent and private matter is essential to comply with the moral and legal imperative of equality.

We are confident that there is a clear way forward that will allow states to achieve both goals to the maximum extent feasible for this year's elections, while encouraging additional advances in technology to fully serve the needs of all voters and election officials in future elections.

We believe action by election officials should be guided by four fundamental principles:

1. The voting process, particularly the voting systems and the administration of elections, must be uniform and nondiscriminatory;
2. Voters must be able to independently and privately cast and verify their ballot;
3. Any voting system must comply with national certification standards; and
4. Voter confidence and reliability in the electoral process must be maintained.

Less than ten weeks before the national elections, potential problems with voter registration lists, new and unproven technologies, insufficient resources for poll worker training, and inadequate voter education are increasingly being scrutinized for their potential to rob voters of their right to cast a vote that is counted. These, however, are not the only threats to the integrity of the elections, as a report released by People For the American Way Foundation and the NAACP makes clear.

The Long Shadow of Jim Crow: Voter Intimidation and Suppression in America documents that the vestiges of voter intimidation, oppression and suppression were not swept away by the Voting Rights Act or by subsequent efforts to enforce it. In fact, deliberate efforts to deceive or intimidate voters into staying away from the polls continue to emerge in nearly every major election cycle.

NAACP Board Chairman Julian Bond has been quoted as saying that "Minority voters bear the brunt of every form of disenfranchisement, including pernicious efforts to keep them away from the polls."

"This report is a reminder that while we are keeping an eye on state officials and new voting machines, we cannot relax our vigilance against these kinds of direct assaults on voters' rights."

Poll taxes, literacy tests and physical violence of the Jim Crow era have been replaced by more subtle and creative tactics.

This summer, Michigan state Rep. John Pappageorge (R-Troy) was quoted in the Detroit Free press as saying, "If we do not suppress the Detroit vote, we're going to have a tough time in this election." African Americans comprise 83% of Detroit's population.

In Kentucky in July 2004, Black Republican officials joined to ask their State GOP party chairman to renounce plans to place "vote challengers" in African-American precincts during the coming elections.

Most recently, controversy has erupted over the use in the Orlando area of armed, plain-clothes officers from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to question elderly black voters in their homes as part of a state investigation of voting irregularities in the city's March 2003 mayoral election. Critics have charged that the tactics used by the FDLE have intimidated black voters, which could suppress their turnout in this year's elections. Six members of Congress recently called on Attorney General John Ashcroft to investigate potential civil rights violations in the matter.

This year in Florida, the state ordered the implementation of a "potential felon" purge list to remove voters from the rolls, in a disturbing echo of the infamous 2000 purge, which removed thousands of eligible voters, primarily African-Americans, from the rolls. The state abandoned the plan after news media investigations revealed that the 2004 list also included thousands of people who were eligible to vote, and heavily targeted African-Americans while virtually ignoring Hispanic voters.

In South Dakota's June 2004 primary, Native American voters were prevented from voting after they were challenged to provide photo IDs, which they were not required to present under state or federal law.

Earlier this year in Texas, a local district attorney claimed that students at a majority black college were not eligible to vote in the county where the school is located. It happened in Waller County—the same county where 26 years earlier, a federal court order was required to prevent discrimination against the students.

Last year, voters in African American areas of Philadelphia were systematically challenged by men carrying clipboards and driving sedans with magnetic signs designed to look like law enforcement insignia.

The Long Shadow of Jim Crow also reviews the historical roots of recent voter intimidation and suppression efforts in the days following emancipation, through Reconstruction and the "Second Reconstruction," the years immediately following the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act was among the crowning achievements of the civil rights era, and a defining moment for social justice and equality. Yet as The Long Shadow of Jim Crow documents, attempts to erode and undermine those victories have never disappeared. Voter intimidation is not a relic of the past, but a strategy used with disturbing frequency in recent years. Sustaining the promise of the civil rights era, and maintaining

the dream of equal voting rights for every citizen requires constant vigilance, courageous leadership, and an active, committed and well-informed citizenry.

This year, with widespread predictions of a historically close national election and an unprecedented wave of new voter registration, unscrupulous political operatives may seek any advantage, including suppression and intimidation efforts. As in the past, minority voters and low-income populations will be the most likely targets of dirty tricks at the polls.

"Forewarned is forearmed," said Bond. "We are reminding voters, election officials, and the media about the kinds of dirty tricks that can be expected. We must be prepared to confront and defeat them."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues on this side of the aisle to take heed to the warning of Mr. Bond, for four more years is a very long time and could mean the difference between a safe America and continued war and costly occupation; money for our children's education and failure to utilize affirmative action to bring about equality in education; respect for the U.S. Constitution and continually closing doors to federal courthouses. Four years could mean a very long time if we do not work for change in the administration of our government.

BIG TROUBLE LIES AHEAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for half the time until midnight or approximately 43 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I think it was in The Music Man where the seller of that musical equipment here in River City. We have big troubles here in Washington, D.C., and in America, for a couple of reasons.

The competition from other countries as they try to copy our techniques of production means that the competition is greater than it has ever been. Our future generations are going to be much more challenged than we have been. Actually, the baby boomers are a generation that is going to start retiring in the next 4 or 5 years; 73 million baby boomers will start retiring, probably the richest retirees that this country has ever had, probably the richest retirees this country will ever have.

We have some challenges in Washington as politicians tend to solve more and more problems, saying, somehow it must be Washington's responsibility rather than the individual's responsibility to solve some of these problems. What we have done is ended up, for example, with a tax system where now, today, 50 percent of the adults in the United States only pay about 1 percent of the income tax. So, of course, there is a lot of that 50 percent who are suggesting that maybe government should solve more of their problems because they do not have a stake in it.

The flat tax or the consumption tax, the sales tax are some suggestions that say, everybody has to have a stake in