

right concept and respect States rights, to respect the 10th amendment, they did it for the first time and once again got it wrong. For in their respect for the process, the majority of the Court forgot the constitutional principle involved.

We have talked, as the Constitutional Caucus, a great deal about the concept of federalism. Federalism is not the same thing as States rights. Federalism is the idea of a balance between the national and State governments solely for the purpose of protecting individual liberty and individual property. States rights is decisions and powers being made at the State level, which usually produces the proper result, but every once in a while has a history of abuse of power.

This particular situation, the Kelo decision, is one of those, where one of our good States in New England, both the local government and State decided to use eminent domain to take property from individuals not for the public good, but for economic development, a government abuse of property rights for the sake of money.

Fortunately, the dissenters of the Supreme Court clearly understood it. In reading the words of the dissent on the Kelo situation, they said, "If such 'economic development' takings are for a 'public use,' any taking is, and the Court has erased the public use clause from our Constitution." Further, he said, "The takings clause also prohibits the government from taking property except 'for public use.' Were it otherwise, the takings clause would either be meaningless or empty."

It was appropriate for this body, immediately after that decision, to pass both the resolution and the law condemning those decisions. It is also appropriate at the 1-year anniversary that we once again understand and review the significance of that concept of personal property rights.

The Supreme Court recently made a decision this week dealing with wetlands cases. We are talking, as well as the Senate, about the concept of death taxes. Both of those have at their core the understanding of the significance and importance of personal property rights. It is right and proper for us at the dedication of this anniversary of this infamous decision on Kelo to once again restate and reunderstand our purpose and the purpose of this government, which is to protect personal property.

JUNETEENTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the World Refugee Day as we keep the flame of hope alive, showing some 20.8 million internally displaced refugees fleeing persecution who are now looking to the world to ask for relief.

As I stand to acknowledge that day, I draw the House's attention to a day I believe that symbolizes the hopes and dreams of many. Although the occasion of Juneteenth happens to be a holiday that is celebrated by African Americans, it is, in fact, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. So I say simply that it is symbolic of people who are in need of empowerment.

And, in fact, this celebration took place in this country, and certainly in the State of Texas, over the last 3 days, this past weekend. I participated with my colleagues in different States to celebrate Juneteenth, as well as my constituents, on Saturday and Sunday and Monday.

From its Galveston, Texas, origin in 1865, the observance of June 19 is considered the African American Emancipation Day even as it claimed a time frame in which African Americans were actually denied the knowledge of their freedom. Those in Texas did not hear of the declaration that President Lincoln made until 1865.

Today Juneteenth commemorates, I believe, African American freedom and symbolically freedom around the world. And that is why in the beginning I stood and acknowledged this is World Refugee Day, for refugees are looking for freedom and hope, and they belong to us, and they are placed around the world.

This special day of Juneteenth, however, emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings.

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It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement and planning for the future. But it is a time for reinvesting, restoring ourselves. It relates to the struggle of freedom. It reinforces the fact that freedom is not easy and it is not free, and as those who stood witness waiting in the State of Texas near the Galveston Bay to find out whether they were free, there are many who still stand waiting for that call of freedom.

The growing popularity of Juneteenth signifies a level of maturity and dignity in America long overdue. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today. Sensitized the ties to the conditions and experiences much others only then can we make significant and lasting improvements in our society.

The civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties yielded both positive and negative results for the Juneteenth celebrations. While it pulled many of the African American youth away and into the struggle for racial equality,

many linked these struggles to the historical struggles of their ancestors. They wanted to be free of the Juneteenth celebration.

This was evidenced as students began to participate in student demonstrations involved in the Atlanta civil rights campaign in the early 1960s, who wore Juneteenth freedom buttons. Again, in 1968, Juneteenth received another strong resurgence through the Poor Peoples March to Washington, D.C. Reverend Ralph David Abernathy called for people of all races, creeds, economic levels and professions to come to Washington to show their support for the poor.

Juneteenth has a way of generating the kind of compassion for the struggle and, of course, a reason for fighting for freedom.

Let me thank Representative Al Edwards, a constituent of mine and a State representative who can be called the father of Juneteenth in the State of Texas, establishing the first State holiday for African Americans, Juneteenth, June 19, here in the State of Texas that we have the opportunity to celebrate.

He has not finished his work, for he continues to promote the Juneteenth Commission, and I am very proud that on Monday morning, we opened and christened the first Juneteenth statute in the State of Texas. This holiday, however, is spreading across the country as a symbol of freedom.

Tomorrow we will have the opportunity, as we have had today, to acknowledge the that people are still struggling for freedom by World Refugee Day, but tomorrow this body will have the opportunity to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965, now in 2006, now named the Fannie Lou Hammer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act.

I ask my colleagues in the name of Juneteenth and many other symbolic holidays that establish and create freedom, that we should stand tall for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. It should not be a political struggle or a power struggle. It should be the right struggle, the right thing to do.

And for those who intend to offer what we call poison pill amendments, I would ask my colleagues to defeat them handily, because the Voting Rights Act is a symbol of freedom for all, all colors, all creeds, to be able to suggest that every citizen has a right to vote. Whether they speak English or not, Mr. Speaker, they have a right to vote, and these amendments that are being offered to undermine their voting rights say that if you are a citizen and you speak a different language, you cannot have the protection of the Voting Rights Act.

I ask my colleagues to join us in continuing the freedom statement of the Juneteenth holiday and to vote for the Voting Rights Act tomorrow. Juneteenth is alive and well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark the occasion of Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated

commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. From its Galveston, Texas origin in 1865, the observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States and beyond.

Today Juneteenth commemorates African-American freedom. This special day emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas, a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement and for planning the future. Its growing popularity signifies a level of maturity and dignity in America long over due. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today. Sensitized to the conditions and experiences of others, only then can we make significant and lasting improvements in our society.

The Civil Rights movement of the 50's and 60's yielded both positive and negative results for the Juneteenth celebrations. While it pulled many of the African American youth away and into the struggle for racial equality, many linked these struggles to the historical struggles of their ancestors. This was evidenced by student demonstrators involved in the Atlanta civil rights campaign in the early 1960's, whom wore Juneteenth freedom buttons. Again in 1968, Juneteenth received another strong resurgence through Poor Peoples March to Washington D.C.. Rev. Ralph Abernathy's call for people all races, creeds, economic levels and professions to come to Washington to show support for the poor. Many of these attendees returned home and initiated Juneteenth celebrations in areas previously absent of such activity. In fact, two of the largest Juneteenth celebrations founded after this March are now held in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

TEXAS BLAZES THE TRAIL

On January 1, 1980, Juneteenth became an official state holiday through the efforts Rep. Al Edwards, an African American state legislator. The successful passage of this bill marked Juneteenth as the first emancipation celebration granted official state recognition. Representative Edwards has since actively sought to spread the observance of Juneteenth all across America.

JUNETEENTH IN MODERN TIMES

Throughout the 80's and 90's Juneteenth has continued to enjoy a growing and healthy interest from communities and organizations throughout the country. Institutions such as the Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum and others have begun sponsoring Juneteenth-centered activities. In recent years, a number of National Juneteenth Organizations have arisen to take their place along side older organizations—all with the mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African American history and culture.

Juneteenth today, celebrates African American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. As it takes on a more national and even global perspective, the events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten, for all of the roots tie back to this fertile soil from which a national day of pride is growing. The future of Juneteenth looks bright as the number of cities and states come on board and form local committees and organizations to coordinate the activities.

With the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 coming up on the floor tomorrow, it is important to remember that the VRA is one of the most effective civil rights statute ever enacted, and while its successes has generated increased political power for many at the local, state, and federal levels, there is still much work to be done. Critical provisions of the Act, including the language assistance provisions contained within Section 203, are set to expire next year. The right to vote is only meaningful when the language of the ballot and other election materials is fully comprehensible to the voter.

Recently, a 9-foot bronze statue, created by Eddie Dixon of Lubbock, was erected in the city of Galveston, TX. The Statue depicts a man holding the state law that made Juneteenth a state holiday in 1979. It was at the Ashton Villa where Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger of the U.S. Army is believed to have read a proclamation on June 19, 1865, announcing that slaves were free. The historic emancipation proclamation enacted by President Abraham Lincoln went into effect Jan. 1, 1863. Monday marked the 27th year that people have gathered to celebrate Juneteenth.

ON THE ONGOING DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF BLACK VOTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, I come to the floor to say to that the dream of full participation by all Americans has yet to be fulfilled. And, in fact, even at the dawn of a new century, black voters are still confronted with a concerted effort to deny their right to vote when it is politically necessary and expedient to do so.

We can start with the fiasco that brought the current administration to power, the Florida vote of 2000. First of all, in testimony from African American voters in Florida, outright voter intimidation is documented in dozens of cases.

You know, the passage of time is a wonderful thing. It makes wine taste better; it makes women look better; it makes us long for the days of good music, however we define "good music." The older songs always just seem the best.

So, too, it is with information. But with the passage of time, truth crushed to the Earth, rises. The ashes of the Phoenix rise.

As a result of a town hall meeting that I organized in Georgia, bringing in the vice president of ChoicePoint, the company hired by the Florida Board of Elections under the control of the then Secretary of State KATHERINE HARRIS, we now know that ChoicePoint was asked to provide an incorrect list of supposed convicted felons who would be denied the right to vote in Florida. The only thing is that the list compiled by ChoicePoint imported data from several States; Ohio, New Jersey and Texas.

Now, it just so happens that the Governor of Texas is now our President, and the interesting thing about the list that was given from Texas to KATHERINE HARRIS in Florida is that it was not a list of convicted felons. The Texas list was a list of those convicted of misdemeanors, thereby enlarging the number of entrants on the ChoicePoint list destined for Florida.

Now, why is this important? Because the method of disenfranchisement in Florida was to deny people the right to vote based on fictitious felony conviction records. And since KATHERINE HARRIS had told ChoicePoint that she only wanted an 80 percent match, an example is that John Smythe, who had committed a misdemeanor in Texas, say, for example, became John Smith, a convicted felon in Florida. The list was labeled by race, so that the folks down in Florida knew who would be denied the right to vote before the voting even started.

As a result, ChoicePoint presented a list of about 90,000 so-called convicted felons, whose only crime was being registered to vote in a battleground State whose leaders were willing to commit crimes in order to deny people the right to vote. And I am sorry that the Democrats didn't fight this gross travesty of justice carried out against black voters.

Now, there will be folks who will say that we don't need a Voting Rights Act any more. If you ask George Wallace or George Maddox or, for that matter, even Strom Thurmond back then, I am sure they would have said you didn't need a Voting Rights Act then too. I am sure they would have said no.

But if this gross disenfranchisement scheme could happen in 2000, it means that the right to vote and the right to representation are still precious, so precious that we have to have laws in place to protect those who will not respect the rights of their fellow Americans.

Then in 2002 we learned that cross-over voting can be used as effectively as the all-white primaries were to deny African American voters their right to choose their representatives.

I am glad to know that BENNIE THOMPSON from Mississippi, our colleague, has filed a lawsuit against Mississippi's open primary statute. We need to rid the South of open primaries, because, as in my State, they were enacted in the days when the lips of staunch segregationists dripped with the words of nullification and interposition.

The advent of the electronic voting machines offers another peril to the voting rights of all Americans who use them. In my own district, those machines broke down, burned out, froze screens and cast votes for the candidate not intended by the voter.

In Georgia, our machines are also equipped with a wireless capability. That means that somebody who has got a Treo that is properly outfitted can come in and change the outcome of