

issued identification documents will be burdened with the expenses of obtaining one of those prescribed forms of ID.

Because of the state's so-called "rational basis" for requiring photo identification in order to vote, Indiana's state photo ID law was upheld by the Supreme Court in Crawford in 2008.

The effects of such a ruling are unduly discriminatory and target specific groups of voters: low income voters, racial and ethnic minorities, senior citizens, disabled voters, and college students. I will leave you to guess which party has been behind the concerted and overzealous efforts by state legislatures and governors to push these discriminatory bills.

Eleven percent of the population, or roughly 21 million people, do not have a government-issued photo identification document.

Nationwide, depending on the state, African-Americans are 2 or 3 times as likely as their white counterparts to lack government-issued photo identification. Nearly a fifth of our seniors do not have government-issued photo IDs.

We must remember that voting is a right under our Constitution, not a privilege. We must prevent this effort to turn back the hands of time in order to prevent eligible voters from exercising their Constitutional rights.

TEXAS

Now, I am sad to report that my home state of Texas has been the latest victim of the systematic effort to suppress votes all around America. In late May, Governor Rick Perry signed into law the Texas iteration of voter photo identification legislation, which was based upon the extremely restrictive Indiana photo ID law.

The history and current state of discriminatory voter suppression in Texas is so pervasive that any substantive change to its election law must be submitted by preclearance to the Department of Justice under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. This makes Texas one of the 9 states in our country that must submit election law alterations, such as photo ID requirements, to the Department of Justice before the changes are permitted to take effect. The law is set to take effect in January next year.

Currently, Texas election law allows voters to use their birth certificate, a current utility bill, a government check, a paycheck, official mail addressed to them, and other documents in lieu of a driver's license issued by the state or a U.S. passport. These documents have long been sufficient in the state of Texas to prove one's identity for the purposes of voting.

However, once the new law takes effect, those alternative forms of identification will be unavailable to citizens of Texas. In fact, Texan voters will be unable to use their birth certificate, which is issued by the State of Texas, in order to vote.

Now, this fact is particularly revealing, especially in light of the purported reason for passing voter photo identification legislation, which is to combat a "supposed" widespread problem of voter impersonation fraud.

If we are to accept their argument that the voter photo ID laws are for the purpose of preventing voter impersonation fraud, then why not continue to allow people to use birth certificates? By banning citizens from using their state-issued birth certificates, we are required to believe the ridiculous and unfounded notion

of people stealing other people's birth certificates in order to show up at an election to vote! Where is the sense in that? I don't know about you, but I have never heard a single case in which a person stole someone else's birth certificate and then showed up at the polls and voted as that person.

No, the fact that birth certificates were removed from Texas election law as a permissible form of identification reveals that voter impersonation fraud is merely a pretextual argument; a guise under which the real purpose of suppressing the votes of certain people can be achieved. That is something for which we cannot stand.

However, while a birth certificate is no longer good enough to prove your identity for the purpose of voting in the State of Texas, "coincidentally", the new law does allow voters to use concealed handgun licenses in order to be permitted to cast their ballots.

There is no doubt that the Texas Voter ID law was specifically crafted with the intent to impose new obligations on the rights of certain Texans to vote, while attempting to preserve the rights of other citizens they believe to be predisposed to voting a certain way.

This is wrong in the State of Texas, and it is wrong in America.

CONCLUSION

In the Harper Supreme Court case, Justice Douglas closed his majority opinion with these words: "Wealth or fee paying has, in our view, no relation to voting qualifications; the right to vote is too precious, too fundamental to be so burdened or conditioned."

Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have remaining, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 4 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I would like to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

□ 1100

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlelady, and I would also like to thank Representative FUDGE for her leadership.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlelady may not yield blocks of time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlelady. I would also like to thank Representative FUDGE and the Congressional Black Caucus.

This issue of voter identification and voter suppression goes to the heart of our Constitution in this country. Eleven percent of adults would not have a qualified identification to be able to go and vote; 25 percent of African Americans would not have a qualified ID to be able to vote.

And I have one question: Where's the Tea Party on this issue? Where's the Tea Party with all the placards about freedom and liberty and we're losing our country? We have an issue that is fundamental to what it means to be an American, the right to vote. The question I have is: Where's the Tea Party on the voter suppression issue?

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman. And I yield now to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON).

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. I thank Congresswoman JACKSON LEE.

Mr. Speaker, voting is a fundamental right of every American. Yet here we are, decades after the civil rights movement, watching as States across this great Nation pass laws that threaten the ability of citizens to participate in our government. This trend is troubling and one that we must closely monitor. My State, the great Hoosier State of Indiana, was the first to impose a strict law requiring voters to present government-issued identification despite having no evidence of actual voter fraud.

As other States follow suit, we risk broadening the threat to the rights of the poor, the elderly, the young, and minority voters. I do not believe the right to vote should hinge on one's ability to obtain specific identification. As a Nation, we should not allow laws that block the rights of vulnerable groups or discriminate. To do so would be to forfeit the fundamental quality of this right and the purpose behind it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote. By stoking the fires of fear and anger, aided and abetted by the U.S. Supreme Court with its Citizens United decision opening the door for unlimited corporate spending on elections, the Republicans seized a death grip on this Congress. Now they want to keep control of Congress so they have embarked on an old strategy, voter suppression.

One of their tactics in making it more difficult for citizens to vote is imposing an unnecessary requirement that voters show a State-issued ID to vote. This is a blatant attempt to keep certain populations from voting, thus ensuring that Republicans maintain control of Congress.

Voter suppression is not right. It is not fair, and it is simply un-American.

And that's real, ya'll.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank Congresswoman FUDGE and let me make a commitment to the American people that you can be assured that these Members of Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Tri-Caucus, will stand in the gap to prevent elections from being stolen and your fundamental birthright of voting from being stolen. That is justice, and we will be fighting for justice.

CONEY ISLAND CELEBRATES 125TH YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor something really wonderful in my district, the 125th birthday of America's sixth-oldest amusement park in Cincinnati, Ohio.

What began as a 20-acre apple orchard on the banks of the Ohio River in

1867 was quickly transformed into a private picnic retreat, complete with a bowling alley, a dance hall, and a mule-powered merry-go-round.

In 1886, Parker Grove became known as Ohio Grove, the Coney Island of the West, after being sold to the Ohio Grove Corporation. Modeling itself after Coney Island in New York City, they quickly dropped the name of Ohio Grove and just called it Coney Island and began to add more rides and more attractions. In 1911, the first roller coaster was added, the Dip the Dips, and in 1913 the Dip and Dots was added. But it wasn't until 1924 that the signature attraction of Coney Island was realized when George Schott, one of Cincinnati's greatest philanthropists, purchased with a group of investors Coney Island.

In 1925, they added Sunlite Pool, the world's largest recirculating swimming pool. Mr. Speaker, let me give you the dimensions of this pool because it is bigger than a football field. A football field is 300 feet by 160 feet; this is 200 feet by 401 feet. In addition to being the world's largest recirculating pool, it continues to be the largest flat surface pool in North America, and was the precursor to zero-depth pools in the United States. It went through a lot of trials and tribulations over the next part of the century, but they kept adding new attractions and new rides, including ones that I enjoyed as a child, like the Wildcat and the Shooting Star.

In 1971, a decision was made to take the amusement portion of it and move it to another portion in my district in Kings Island, which made people wonder what would happen to Sunlite Pool. But again, the visionaries realized they had an attraction, they had a water park, and they continued to add dimensions to Sunlite Pool to make it an attraction. In 1986, River Bend was realized by putting in two separate theaters, outdoor theaters, to allow concerts to occur. Today, Coney Island continues to thrive with a small amusement park for children, the Sunlite Pool, and a thriving River Bend.

I would like to say, on a personal note, I remember my mother telling me stories when her mother took her; my mother took me; I took my daughter; and over the Fourth of July break, I was able to take my two grandsons to Coney Island to swim in the pool.

I am so excited that this beautiful attraction has continued to exist for 125 years. I want to celebrate the tenacity of the folks along the way who have continued to invest in this great asset in my district, and I want to wish them a great happy birthday, and I hope Coney Island continues for at least another 125 happy years. Happy birthday, Coney Island.

GETTING AMERICANS OUT OF DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CLARKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, to the American people, I want to address the debt that is killing jobs in this country and robbing Americans of their financial security. And I also will propose how we get out of that debt, to really create jobs and restore financial security to all Americans.

Now, the Federal debt is important. We have to do everything we can this week and next week to avoid a government default, because if the government defaults on its obligations, at the very least that is going to cause interest rates to rise on the borrowing that the American people hold as debt and that could drive people further into financial distress and into foreclosure and bankruptcy.

But the debt that is crushing the American people is the mortgages, the student loans, the credit cards, that people have to bear. Now I am from Detroit, and jobs are important. In fact, I represent one of the regions of the country that has the highest unemployment rate. But as important as jobs are to the economy, we have got to get Americans out of debt. I know folks who are working right now, they have jobs, they are earning income, but they have no money because their income is going to pay off bills. It's going to creditors. They can't provide for themselves. They can't provide for their families. They can't provide security for the future because they are in debt. And this American personal debt is also costing this U.S. economy jobs because when people don't have money to save, money to invest, they can't really spend it on businesses that could hire more people and create more jobs.

My point is this, and I am speaking to a few of the Members of Congress who are here right now, but more importantly, I am speaking to you, the American people, because maybe you can help me drive this Congress to address the real debt that is threatening this democracy and our economy.

□ 1110

This country's economy will not rebound strongly, and we will not easily get out of this recession as long as Americans are underwater on their mortgages, defaulting on student loans, and maxing out on their credit cards. If we want to create jobs, jobs that will truly be sustainable and help provide families with real financial security, this Congress must realize that when the American people are in debt, so is this country.

So here's what I'm urging today. I am going to have a resolution I'm going to put forth, that as we work to prevent a government default on its obligations, that we also have to work to make sure that Americans don't further default on their debt. So I am asking, in as strong as possible a way as I can, for this Congress, on certain loan obligations, to immediately work to cut mortgages down to the value of your home, to forgive student loans,

because the most powerful way that we can restore our economic strength, to create jobs that are sustainable, is to help Americans get out of debt.

Now Congress has an obligation to do so because we changed the rules over the past decade or so to put Americans in all this debt. But just as Congress has an obligation to act, I've got to talk to you, the American people. You've got to act, too. You've got to take responsibility. You want this government to get out of debt, then you get out of debt personally. Stop the spending. Stop the borrowing. Stop overconsumption, buying things that you don't need with money that you don't have. That's robbing you and your family of a future. It's robbing this country out of jobs.

So I am going to ask every American right now, get out your credit cards, cut them up, free yourselves. Free yourselves. Don't count on this Congress to help you. This Congress already voted to end Medicare. They're flirting with disaster on this debt right now.

I'm asking Americans, take control of your financial future, get out of debt, and let's demand that this Congress help you get out of debt.

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE ACT IS A PLAN THAT CAN WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today the House is going to debate a bill that holds the potential to move us away from a debt crisis and toward prosperity. I want to associate myself with the comments that were made by our colleague the gentlelady from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) a couple of speakers ago when she talked about how our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say that it is irresponsible to amend the Constitution in order to require the Congress to balance the budget.

Yesterday in the Rules Committee, we heard from the gentleman from Maryland who talked about how we're twisting the Constitution to put in a limit on how we could cut taxes, raise taxes, into the Constitution, that how, by putting a two-thirds vote and restrictions into the Constitution, we're damaging the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Congresses in the past have proven that they don't have the restraint that's necessary to keep our spending under control. We need a constitutional amendment in order to do that.

They did admit yesterday that we are paying the credit card from the past, and I want to point out that under President Obama, the average annual deficits that were in existence under President Bush became monthly deficits under President Obama. Since 2½ years ago, the national debt has increased by \$3.7 trillion.