

with his jobs bill proposal—and, frankly, many who analyze it would say this is stimulus number two. It's just another government spending program hoping the government borrowing and spending will lead to economic growth and wealth and jobs. And if you look at it, I think the President is saying, I want to do something. And I say, I don't want to do necessarily "something." I want to do the right thing so we can create economic growth and prosperity and wealth and jobs.

This is my concern of what's happening right now: I think the President came into office talking about hope and change and job growth and job creation, and he implemented stimulus number one. And from that, it didn't work because it's never worked. Government borrowing, government massive spending doesn't create jobs. But that was his sell to the American people.

Now as we roll into the second phase, I think this is the campaign phase, the political phase. So instead of focusing on policies that bring the bottom up, that help give hardworking folks a good-paying job or a good-paying opportunity, he is now focusing on class warfare. I think that's the wrong way to go. Our policies that we are implementing, that we passed and have sent to the Senate are policies that will create jobs.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman, I thank all my friends for being here tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CBC HOUR: VOTER IDENTIFICATION LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about voter suppression bills that are pending or are already signed into law in a number of States across this land. They have only one true purpose, which is to disenfranchise eligible voters.

Many of my colleagues will be joining me this evening, and I would like to begin by yielding to my good friend, Mr. RUSH HOLT, from the State of New Jersey.

Mr. HOLT. I thank my friend and colleague from Ohio.

I am pleased to come to the floor tonight to talk about a serious issue: whether the voice of the people will be heard. As citizens of this Nation, the voting franchise is not just our constitutional right; it is the right through which all other rights are secured, our primary voice in how this country is run. And right now around this Nation, there are people who are working actively to disenfranchise specific sectors of our citizenry.

How is this happening? Well, this year, in 38 States, there is legislation

being considered or, in some cases, already approved to make it more difficult for citizens to register to vote, making it impossible to vote early, and to require identification that serves to eliminate or restrict voting for large numbers of people. Restrictions on voter registration have placed such burdens on groups organizing community-based voting drives—such as the League of Women Voters—that several organizations have suspended voter registration drives in some States due to the onerous nature of the legislation.

Now, if there were a threat of voter fraud as the proponents of these laws assert, it might make sense, but there is no threat of voter fraud. Are there rampant cases of impersonation, voting as someone else? No. Voter fraud is not rampant. There are not numerous cases of impersonation. There may be isolated instances, sure, of alleged voter fraud, but to disenfranchise millions of people because there are a few cases is really contrary to the American system of government.

In 23 States and the District of Columbia that allow voters to show both photo and nonphoto ID, such as a utility bill or a bank statement, there is no evidence of voter impersonation, no evidence that fraud is occurring. It's a phantom menace of fraud that is the basis for a well-funded movement around the country making it difficult for eligible voters to cast their votes.

Are photo ID laws prohibitive? Yes, they are. A recent report by the Brennan Center for Justice of NYU law school concluded that the newly enacted State laws affecting more than 5 million eligible voters will disproportionately disenfranchise young, low-income, elderly, and minority voters. In 2006, the Brennan Center completed a nationwide survey of voting-age citizens and found that African American voters are more than three times as likely as Caucasians to lack a government-issued photo ID.

Restrictions on registration, limits on early voting, and photo ID requirements at the polls all serve to discourage young, low-income, minority, and elderly voters from participating in their constitutional right to vote. Should they reach the polls and successfully cast their ballot, of course we have to ask whether their vote will be counted accurately.

In the past, literacy tests and poll taxes were used to selectively allow certain citizens to vote and to exclude others. Those laws were and are illegal. We should make sure that they remain illegal in the 21st century. 21st century poll taxes, which, in effect, these restrictions are, seek to suppress the voices of people who have a right to vote and whose voices should be recorded because we need their wisdom at the polls.

Now the motto should be, "Everyone Counts." And there's much to be said—and we'll say this at another time—about making sure that every vote

that is cast is counted. Election auditing can be used to ensure that voting errors are minimized, performing a check on the results recorded by electronic voting machines against a verifiable record, paper record of the vote.

But tonight we want to talk about the systematic disenfranchising of people who are citizens, who should be voting, and whom we should want to vote.

I am pleased that my friend has taken this time tonight, and I am certainly pleased to join you.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentleman so much for his insight.

I now yield to someone who I know, coming from the State of Wisconsin, has a great deal of experience in this area, my good friend, the gentlelady from Wisconsin, Ms. GWEN MOORE.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much, Representative FUDGE, for putting together this Special Order to talk about voter suppression laws.

I was first elected in 1988; and 2 years after that, in 1990, I began a career from that point on, up until this very day, fighting against these voter suppression laws. And the reason that I began my career that early is because our now-Governor of the State of Wisconsin led the effort to require voter ID, very strict forms of voter ID, in order to suppress the votes of certain members, certain populations in the Wisconsin community. So I am ashamed to announce today, Representative FUDGE, that Wisconsin has joined the map of shame. It is one of seven States in red here on the map of shame that have very stringent voter ID laws in order to be able to vote.

Having debated this issue for many years, I know what the basic arguments for this are, and they're all discredited.

□ 2020

We have heard such arguments from our Governor, who was then a State representative, that if you need a voter ID to buy liquor or to buy medicine or to get a Blockbuster's video, surely you should need a voter ID for something as important as voting. I think that that is demonstrably a problem with that line of thinking. There is no more fundamental right than the right to vote. You don't have the right to drink liquor, Representative FUDGE. You don't have the right to get a video from Blockbuster. And, shamefully, you don't have a right to health care. You don't have a right to get a prescription drug. But you do have a right to vote, so the bar ought to be extremely high to disenfranchise voters.

Now, we are discouraged on this floor and in this House from questioning the motivation of people who offer legislation. And in that same light, I question the motivation of those people who say that we must have this kind of legislation.

The Wisconsin attorney general's office found that in a 2-year election fraud task force investigation that

there were 20 instances of possible voter fraud out of 3 million votes cast in 2008, the year that President Barack Obama ran, which is 0.0007 percent, and not a single one of these cases would have been prevented had the person had a voter ID. If it was a felon who had voted, your driver's license doesn't say "felon" on it. There was not a single case where a photo ID would have prevented these discrepancies. So I began to wonder about the motives of those who have said that we must have this law. Who are they trying to disenfranchise?

In the State of Wisconsin, 17 percent of white men and women don't have this kind of ID; 49 percent of African American women don't have this kind of ID; 55 percent of all African American males don't have this kind of ID; 46 percent of Hispanic men don't have this kind of ID; 59 percent of all Hispanic women don't have it; 66 percent of African American women ages 18 to 24 don't have this ID; and 78 percent of African American males ages 18 to 24 do not have this kind of ID.

In addition to this, there's a cost to getting the paperwork, the underlying paperwork to get a photo ID. You have to pay \$20 for a replacement birth certificate, and in some States, you have to have a photo ID to get a birth certificate. And there are other costs.

In Wisconsin, a place where the largest number of these African American and Hispanic men and women who don't have this photo ID reside, there is no Department of Motor Vehicle station, Congresswoman FUDGE, that is open, has evening hours or weekend hours, so the burden of getting this kind of ID is great.

I do realize that I need to yield back my time, but I just want to mention that this would also have a terrible impact on our young, college-age student voting population. This bill would require that they use a college ID that doesn't exist in the State of Wisconsin. There have been no moneys provided for the universities, none of which have this kind of ID to do it, and it would be a terrible burden on our elderly population who may want to vote absentee and would have to provide a Xerox copy of a photo ID. So for all those elderly Wisconsinites who have Xerox machines in their homes, you will be able to vote absentee from your home.

With that, I thank the gentlelady for yielding and thank you for this Special Order.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much.

I just want to say both my friend, Congresswoman MOORE and my friend, Congressman HOLT, have basically put into context the fact that any time you have to jump over a hurdle or pay to get something to vote, it is a poll tax.

I now want to yield to someone from my home who has been an advocate for voting rights and someone who knows the issues very well because we are facing them in Ohio, the gentlelady from Ohio, my friend, Congresswoman BETTY SUTTON.

Ms. SUTTON. Congresswoman FUDGE, I thank you for your leadership. You have been tremendous in this fight, and it is a fight that unfortunately we didn't ask for, but we must fight on behalf of the American people.

There is nothing more important, there is nothing more American than the right to vote. You know, at a time when government officials from all levels of government should be focused on getting America back to work, unfortunately, we are seeing this scourge of voter disenfranchisement, legislation springing up State to State across this country, and we've heard a little bit about that already today.

So over the past century, our Nation, as we expanded the franchise and knocked down all of the barriers that were so hard fought to increase electoral participation, in 2011 that momentum abruptly shifted. We've heard here tonight about how State governments across the country enacted an array of new laws, making it harder to register to vote in some States, and some States requiring voters to show government-issued photo identification, often of a type that as many as 1 in 10 voters do not have. Other States, like our State, have passed laws to cut back on early voting, a hugely popular innovation used by millions of Americans. Two States reversed earlier reforms and once again disenfranchised millions who have criminal convictions. But these new restrictions fall most heavily on a specific population.

These would be insidious. Any attempt to prevent somebody from exercising their right to vote, of having the voice at the ballot box, would be insidious, but when you look at these laws, you start to see a pattern emerging. There is an effort to target voters who appear, who people think, some people think, may have a tendency to vote for one party over the other party. So voters who are being perceived as Democratic voters are being targeted by these laws. And why do I say that? What is the basis for me saying that? Because we have seen where these voter ID laws fall most harshly.

We heard from the gentlelady from Wisconsin making the case, but it's really important. Let me just tell you a couple of examples. In Tennessee, 96-year-old Dorothy Cooper, a lifelong voter, attempted to secure the new ID that she would need to vote in the next election. When she arrived at the DMV, she was turned away because despite having her birth certificate, current voter registration card, and a copy of her lease, she did not have a marriage license—she was 96—a marriage license, to verify the change of name.

In Texas, thanks to a new voter ID law, students may not use their school-issued photo IDs to vote, and we saw this in Ohio as well, an effort to try and restrict student IDs as a valid form of identification to vote.

So in Texas, while Texans who possess concealed weapons permits are allowed to use their permits to vote,

those with student IDs are not. This justification just seems a little bit arbitrary. And according to one State representative, it's that: "Texas, you know, is a big handgun State so everybody has almost got a concealed handgun license over 21." That was the argument that was given for that distinction.

But the bottom line is this. We are here on the floor tonight because we have people—we've seen the protests out there. We know that there are those, and they are holding signs, and they say: "We are the 99 percent." We see the plight that our middle class families are facing throughout this country, but I think it's worthwhile to bring up that idea about the 99 percent, and I'll tell you why. Because the reality is there are those in this country who have a lot of power, and that's what that 99 percent and the upper 1 percent is about, right? And they have a lot of voice. You know why? Because they have a lot of money that they use to make their voice heard. But the truth is, the upper 1 percent that controls so much of the power and so much of the money in this country still only controls 1 percent of the vote—unless the deck is stacked.

□ 2030

And so that 99 percent needs to have access to the voter box, because that is the place that we are all equal. So I am proud to stand with you to fight back against these efforts to suppress the vote and to stand up for democracy—democracy that was fought for and is still being fought for by our men and women in uniform.

I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank you. And now you can see why in Ohio we are going to defeat everything they bring to us that restricts our right to vote.

I would yield to one of my newer colleagues, one who's from a State where the Voting Rights Act was designed to protect the people of her State, my colleague from the great State of Alabama, the gentlelady, TERRI SEWELL.

Ms. SEWELL. I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for leading this wonderful Special Order hour, and I rise this evening to express my concerns about the voter ID legislation being passed in States across this country. The State of Alabama and other States have passed a law that requires voters to use a photo to ID to be valid.

Now I believe that these types of voter ID laws are really implemented in order to discourage and delay full voter participation in communities across this Nation. It has been alleged by some that voter ID laws are needed to prevent fraud and protect voters who are being victimized. Some political pundits have been taking shots at my own district in Alabama, in particular, alleging blatant voter fraud.

Now I have received numerous feedback from my constituents to the contrary. In fact, my constituents attest

that they are offended at the very thought that these voter ID laws are allegedly about voter protection. The fact is that these voter ID laws are about voter suppression, not voter protection. These laws are in search of a problem that does not exist. Between 2002 and 2005, just 24 people were convicted of or pled guilty at the Federal level to illegal voting.

The reality is that 11 percent of U.S. citizens, or more than 21 million Americans, do not have government-issued photo identification. Also, as many as 25 percent of all African American citizens of voting age do not have government-issued photo IDs. Voter ID laws have a disproportionate and unfair impact on low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, senior citizens, voters with disabilities and others. Many of these individuals do not have government-issued ID or the money to acquire one. It is our obligation as legislators to work to ensure that all American citizens are given the opportunity to express their opinions by using the ballot box. The right to vote is especially sacred in my district where people marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma for the right to vote.

As the daughter of a stroke victim who is now wheelchair-dependent, it is frightening to think that had this law in Alabama been in effect during my election, my very own father would not have possessed a valid photo ID because his driver's license has expired. His struggle is indicative of the struggles of so many disabled Americans who will be disproportionately affected by this law. We cannot stand idly by while citizens across this country are being disenfranchised and discouraged from exercising their right to vote.

Now let me be clear. Voter fraud should not be tolerated and, if discovered, should be prosecuted. Voter fraud is a serious crime. A person who commits voter fraud in a Federal election risks spending 5 years in jail and having to pay a \$10,000 fine, and rightfully so.

We can all agree that our current elections system is in need of some repair. However, the current debate about voter ID and voter fraud distracts us from the real problems with our elections system. We need a progressive system that encourages voting through same-day registration and early voting laws, laws that would make it easier for citizens to exercise their right to vote. The government should be in the business of encouraging, not discouraging people from voting.

As Americans, we can do better. And as legislators, we owe it to the people that we represent to make sure that we do. We cannot compromise the integrity of our democratic system and reverse the enormous progress that our country has made by implementing laws that will seek to discriminate. Now, in protecting my constituents in the Seventh Congressional District of

Alabama and in this Nation, I will continue to work with my colleagues and Representatives like Congresswoman FUDGE to make sure that we vigilantly ensure that States' voter ID laws protect and not suppress all voters.

I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentlelady.

I yield to someone who certainly we all know has been so involved in voting rights and a person on whose shoulders I stand, the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. JOHN LEWIS.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I want to thank the gentlelady from Ohio for holding this Special Order. Congresswoman FUDGE, thank you very, very much. You are making a lasting contribution to this discussion, to this debate.

Voting rights are under attack in America. Quietly, gradually, State by State, the right to vote that many people died for has been taken away. Sometime ago, some of us came to this floor, I believe this past summer, to warn the American people about this dangerous trend. No one, but no one, seemed to be listening. But today, we can no longer ignore this trend.

Congressman HOLT said just a few moments ago that the Brennan Center released a report that shows that voting law changes in States across the country will make it much harder for more than 5 million voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote. In 2011, we should be ashamed.

Today, we should be making it easy, simple and convenient to vote. Instead, we are creating barriers and making it more difficult for citizens to vote. There's not just one law, but many types of laws that are disenfranchising millions of voters: voter ID laws, proof of citizenship laws, barriers to registration, elimination of early and absentee voting, and making it harder to restore voting rights for people who have paid their debt to society. These laws are barriers to an inclusive democracy. They are a disgrace, and they are a shame to our democracy. We continue to step backwards toward another dark time in our history.

We cannot separate the dangerous trend across this Nation from our history and the struggle for the right to vote. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, not so long ago, it was almost impossible for some citizens to register and vote. Many were harassed, jailed, beaten and some were even killed for trying to participate in the democratic process. In the 1960s, people stood in what I like to call immovable lines trying to register to vote. People waited day in and day out, only to be turned away and told that voters were not being registered on that day.

The same thing is happening today. States are passing laws to restrict voter registration and are doing away with the same-day voter registration. There is no reason that we cannot make it easy and convenient for people to register to vote. Ten years ago, the

Carter-Ford National Task Force on Election Reform called the United States' registration laws "among the world's most demanding" and blamed those registration laws for low voter turnout. Because of registration problems, 3 million American citizens tried to vote in the 2008 Presidential election, but they could not vote. And with these new laws restricting voter registration, the problem would get even worse.

□ 2040

One of the most dangerous voting changes is the new voter ID requirements, which are disenfranchising millions of American voters. Approximately 11 percent of voting-age citizens in the country, or more than 20 million individuals, do not have a government-issued photo ID. Today, too many States require a photo ID in order to vote.

Each and every voter ID law is a real threat to voting rights in America. Make no mistake; these voter ID laws are a poll tax. I know what I saw during the sixties; I saw a poll tax. And you cannot deny it; these ID laws are another form of a poll tax. In an economy where people are already struggling to pay for the most basic necessities, there are too many citizens who will be unable to afford the fees and transportation costs involved in getting a government-issued photo ID.

Despite all of the new voter ID laws across the country, there is no convincing evidence—no evidence at all—that voter fraud is a problem in our election process. The right to vote is precious, almost sacred, and one of the most important blessings of our democracy. Today we must stand up and fight.

The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggle for that right. Many people died trying to protect that right. I was beaten and jailed because I stood up for it. For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience. We should not take a step backward with new poll taxes and voter ID laws and barriers to voter registration and voter participation. We must ensure every vote and every voter counts.

The vote is the most powerful, non-violent tool or instrument we have in a democratic society. If we allow our power to vote to be taken away, we will be facing the need for a new movement and a new nonviolent revolution in America to retake the same ground we won almost 50 years ago. We must fight back.

Thank you again for giving us a voice, giving us a way to fight back.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much for the history lesson we just received.

As you know, there are many things going on in the State of Ohio, and that's why I'm joined tonight by another one of my colleagues from the great State of Ohio, my friend, and someone who as well has fought very,

very diligently to make sure that everyone has their right to vote, and that is Congressman TIM RYAN.

I yield to the Congressman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlelady.

A few weeks ago, we had the opportunity of having Congressman LEWIS in Youngstown and then up into Cleveland. And to sit here and listen to him talk about it, it's not words on a piece of paper. As he said, it's not history; it's his experience. And for us in any way, shape, or form to listen to him and to remember the struggles that a lot of people went through in order for Americans to have the right to vote—all Americans to have the right to vote—this seems so petty and so ridiculous that there would be a movement among a conservative group of people across the country to literally try to disenfranchise American citizens.

Now, we all get caught up in the political games, but my goodness gracious, how far are you going to go? You've got Citizens United that says you can spend money left and right in corporations, unlimited funding, and we're seeing it in Ohio now. And then they take this money and they start pushing initiatives like this one, where you are going to literally carve out a part of the electorate that doesn't necessarily vote for your interests because you'll win the game that way. And so these provisions in Ohio now, we're coming up on an election on Tuesday, you can't vote in person stopping Friday night, the weekend before the election. That doesn't make any sense.

Come on, guys. This is not a game. This is an essential right that we have in the United States of America. And you're going to say, well, one in four African Americans doesn't have a government ID; let's carve them out. This fits that category. Oh, if you make under \$35,000 a year, you're twice as likely to not have a government ID; let's put you over there. If you're a senior citizen, if you're elderly and you don't drive anymore, you fit into that category, too. All right, let's put this in 38 different States—or however many—and figure out how we lock them out of the political process or put barriers up.

This is not right. Come on. These people have served the country, worked in the country, served in the military, and all of these other things, contributed, and now you're going to say, well, we're going to put up a few more barriers for you not to be able to vote. It's not right.

I'm getting the sense in Ohio and back in my district that people are really starting to understand that there is a movement to stack the deck against the working class people to reduce their ability to participate in the political system, and I'm not making this up. Right in Ohio, we have a huge initiative right now on Issue 2 that is about taking collective bargaining rights away from police, fire, teachers, nurses, and public employees, a bunch

of corporate money coming in to support it. You have this initiative in Ohio to limit people's right to vote—primarily people who would vote Democratic—national money coming in to support it; cuts being made to make college more expensive; cuts being made to mental health and all of the programs that would lift up these very people.

So I'm happy to join the gentlelady here from Cleveland to say that, one, I'm thankful for you doing this and, two, the work is not yet done. And the American people who have no other choice, now they're taking to the streets. And that may be the only way to get it done, because you can't compete with the hundreds of millions of dollars that are being spent on these initiatives, coordinating these initiatives, and pushing them in States without us, the average folks, trying to push back a little bit. That's what this is about. And I will guarantee you, at the end of the day, when you look at the poll results for Issue 2, for example, people are waking up to see that they're trying to stack the deck against them further, and we're not going to allow that to happen.

I thank the gentlelady.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much. And I do thank my colleague from Ohio because we are going to continue to stand together and we're going to win.

I now yield to the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman DANNY DAVIS.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio not only for yielding, but for convening this discussion this evening.

I was speaking to a group of young people a couple of days ago, and they wanted to know why did we think this whole question of voter suppression was such a big deal. They said, But doesn't everybody have the right to vote? And of course it was necessary to convey to them some of the experiences that people like Representative LEWIS and others have had.

All of us recognize, from a historical perspective, the evolution of the development of our country. Of course when we started, there were only a few people who actually had the right to vote, and they were the individuals who made most of the decisions. Ultimately, we fought a war, and after the war we saw the expansion of opportunity; and yet there were millions of individuals who were denied the same opportunities that others had.

People often ask about Southern States. And you don't pick up on any State, but I remember reading the history of Mississippi, where in 1890 the State of Mississippi devised a system that effectively disenfranchised most African Americans or blacks who were there and adopted a system that other States picked up. But you've got to remember that at that time African Americans made up 58 percent of the population in the State of Mississippi. They elected delegates, and the delegates who were elected—134—consisted

of 133 white men and one black, or one African American.

I am afraid—and I wish that it wasn't so—that there are cynical efforts to manipulate and control and prevent individuals from having the opportunity to exercise the most important franchise in a free and democratic society, and that is the right to help make decisions. And sometimes it's done in so many ways. There's an old saying that if you fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

□ 2050

There are places where the polling places just got changed. People have been accustomed to voting at the Johnson school, and all of a sudden they wake up and it's time to vote and they're now voting at the American Legion Hall. Well, they don't know where the American Legion Hall is; they just go to the Johnson school. And once they get there, they can't vote, then they decide that they'll go on to work or do whatever else it is that they're going to do, and they will miss voting that day.

Poll taxes sound kind of way out and farfetched. But I actually grew up in rural America. It is true that I live in Chicago, a magnificent city, probably the most magnificent city in the United States of America and many other places throughout the world.

But I grew up in rural Arkansas, and there was a \$2 poll tax. My parents paid a \$2 poll tax. Now, the average person who worked in an agrarian environment at that time, the wages were \$4 a day. Four dollars a day. That's what people earned driving tractors. That's what they earned chopping cotton. That's what they earned baling hay.

And to take \$2 out of \$4 that you might earn working a whole day to go and get registered to vote? Well, that meant, for all practical purposes, that many of the people, not just African Americans, mind you, but many of the people who were low-income were not going to participate because they couldn't afford to pay \$2 to register to vote.

And so I join with all of my colleagues who say that this issue is most important, that we must watch it, keep our eyes and hands on it. And we have to make sure that even in places like where I live, I can recall voter suppression during one Presidential election where the whole idea was simply not to vote. People were not going to vote for a different political party at the time. But if they didn't vote, that was the same as voting for the other guy.

So don't fool us. We kind of know what's happening.

I thank you for calling this Special Order.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much, my friend.

I now yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. AL GREEN.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Representative FUDGE. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Friends, although the faces change, the fight remains the same when it comes to the black vote. The Emancipation Proclamation didn't do it. The 13th Amendment didn't do it.

Although the faces change, the fight remains the same. In 1870, the face was that of President Ulysses S. Grant, and the fight was the 15th Amendment and the right to vote. It passed. Although it passed, the faces changed but the fight remained the same because in 1944 it was the NAACP and a great lawyer, Thurgood Marshall, that took *Smith v. Allwright* to the Supreme Court of the United States of America, and they won that case, which eliminated the white primaries in the State of Texas, by the way, in Harris County.

The faces changed but the fight remained the same because it was in 1953 that the NAACP had to go back to court to eliminate the white pre-primaries imposed by the Jaybirds in the State of Texas.

The faces changed but the fight remained the same, because even though we eliminated the white primaries, the white pre-primaries, in 1965 the faces were those of the marchers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge on what we now know as Bloody Sunday. They were beaten back to the church where they started the actual march. The faces of those marchers happen to include the Honorable JOHN LEWIS, Member of Congress.

In 1965, the face was that of LBJ, President of the United States of America. He had the opportunity and did sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The faces changed, but the fight was still the same. We had to have a Voting Rights Act, notwithstanding all of the amendments to the Constitution, and notwithstanding *Smith v. Allwright* and *Terry v. Adams*.

In 2006, the faces changed. George Bush, President of the United States of America, reauthorizes the Voting Rights Act because we still find that there are cases of invidious discrimination when it comes to voting in the United States of America.

The faces changed, but in 2011 the fight remains the same. The faces are those of the 25 percent of African Americans who don't have photo IDs, the faces of the 18 percent of elderly persons 65 or older who don't have photo IDs.

The faces have changed consistently, but the fight is still the same. We still have to fight for this precious right to vote; and this is why we're here tonight, to make sure that we all understand, and the message goes out and the clarion call is there to those who would help us and make sure that on election day we protect the right to vote.

Notwithstanding the fact that the faces have changed, the fight remains the same.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Congressman GREEN. And he's right, the fight remains the same.

I yield now to my classmate and friend from the great State of New York, Mr. TONKO.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative FUDGE, for bringing us together this evening on a very important discussion, one that focuses on the fundamental underpinnings of this democracy, the ability to vote, right to vote, and encouraging voters to come to the polls.

This sort of effort that is being taken seriously by far too many as a form of reform is discouraging. This is an attempt, I believe, to discourage folks from voting across this country, from an effort that is somewhat presented in this description of going after voter impersonation fraud which, obviously, is something that everyone would be concerned about. But the element here is not to do that.

No one can point to this overwhelming evidence that there is this voter impersonation fraud that gets addressed by this sort of approach. What we have here is denial. It's a denial that may impact as many as 5 million Americans.

At a time when we should encourage a thoughtful democracy, encourage participation, this focuses on many who would be disenfranchised. Those who are of lower socioeconomic strata, those who are persons with disabilities, the minority community, the elderly community, those are the targeted forces here. And it is an outright attempt, I believe, to dissuade those who are eligible from voting.

And if we can move forward and encourage people to vote and spend the resources that would be required in the individual States to go and develop this ID system, we could spend those dollars in a better way to go after fraud in a more targeted fashion.

This, I think, is an underhanded approach to taking the voter population that currently exists out there, reducing it, and placing a hardship on people, many of whom do not have IDs. It is suggested that some 11 percent, or 20 million Americans, don't have those IDs, government-issued IDs that would be required with the reform effort that's under way.

So we need to see this for what it is. We need to encourage policy that will enhance the numbers of those voting and go after fraud in a very targeted way. This is not the answer.

There is no fundamental proof. There is no proof positive that it will attack and discourage the voter impersonation fraud out there. It simply doesn't happen.

Again, Representative FUDGE, thank you for leading us in what I think is an important discussion on far too many situations out there that are being taken forward in a way that will be counterproductive.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Congressman TONKO. I appreciate it.

Now, the dean of the Ohio delegation, my friend from Ohio, Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR.

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, a leadership Congresswoman from Ohio, for bringing us together this evening on the important question of voter suppression. And I would like to say for the record that the stability of each of our communities and our Nation rests on the fragile reed of trust, trust of the people, that trust enshrined in our right to vote, and our obligation to do so.

Today, in fact, we passed a resolution that is stated over the Speaker's rostrum: "In God We Trust." Yes, trust. And John F. Kennedy reminded us that here on Earth God's work must truly be our own.

Trying to prevent voter suppression is our work. In Ohio, we see new forms of voter suppression in the works as we watch the redistricting process unfold, the districts in which we will run as Members of the House and Senate in Ohio, whether it's for Congress or our legislature, Ohio, a home-rule State that values community, that values where people live. We call it a home-rule State. Where we live matters.

And yet we see in the redistricting what's happened in Ohio, a State losing population. The population hasn't grown as fast as other States. Of 88 counties in Ohio, 62 county lines completely violated.

□ 2100

What does that do? It moves people around in a district that has no bearing to their community. Hundreds and hundreds of precincts cracked. You go in to vote, as Congressman DAVIS said, you think you're in one precinct, well, gosh, you might even be in the wrong school. Who's going to let you know, especially if you've lost your job and you aren't living where you were before?

We see entire towns in Ohio's redistricting that's proposed by the Republican Party of Ohio hacked apart for no reason, for no sensible reason. Canton, Ohio, is a shadow of its former self. Akron, Ohio; Toledo Ohio—the list goes on.

Let me say that voter suppression discourages voters, especially during this time of economic recession when so many foreclosures have made it more difficult for people to have a home base.

So I would say to the congresswoman, thank you so much this evening for giving us this time to prepare us for the elections of 2012 so that we can in fact prepare to avoid voter suppression in every form that it existed before and in every new form that is being created today. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, for your leadership on this important issue of giving every American their full rights so we can restore trust in the government of the United States.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very, very much, Congresswoman KAPTUR.

Now, to my friend also from the State of Texas, the gentlelady from

Texas, Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her leadership after spending some time with her on the floor listening to the voter suppression occurring in Ohio. I'm grateful for this opportunity. I want to thank the Whip for his leadership on voting rights, election rights, for any number of sessions, starting as early as the election in 2000, when we were brought to confront the issue of voter improprieties.

Let me first of all say that we are seeing the ugly head of the suppression of votes rising across America. Forty States have implemented voter ID laws.

Let me explain to the voters: Voter ID can only respond to voter impersonation. Statistics will tell you that most voters do not show up at the polls trying to be somebody else. In addition, most voters will have a voting card. Now you will suppress those who are elderly, disabled, young, who do not have a State-issued voter ID.

In my district alone this past week-end, I met a woman who was 97 years old in a wheelchair who had attempted to get her voter ID with a photograph pursuant to Texas law that she thought was in place now. It was a difficult challenge. Her relatives went with her, and she could not get her voter ID. I made a commitment that my office would go with her because of the extensive requirements and the intimidation and fear.

But it is also in the State of Texas that we are hearing that many polling people who are in charge of elections for this November 2011 have confused the precinct judges so much that they have even told them that the voter ID law will be in place as of November 2011, and it doesn't go into effect, if it does, until January of 2012—again, to suppress voters, the elderly and minority voters.

I would encourage and ask the Justice Department to be diligent on reviewing all of these voter ID laws. Texas is now being reviewed and it has not been pre-cleared. We ask the Justice Department to declare that it is in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

Let me say that voting is a precious right. I want everyone to be able to vote. And it is documented that fraud is very limited in voting. To eliminate same-day registration, there are no grounds to suggest that there is fraud that occurs in same-day registration.

From the oppression of those who could not vote because of a poll tax, because of counting of the jelly beans in a jar, all of that leads to the oppression that keeps people from voting.

So I stand today on the floor of the House to say we will never give up the fight. We're going to fight these voter ID laws. We're going to fight these laws that are going to intimidate our voters. Intimidation, fear, and oppression will not survive this election of 2011 or 2012. We are going to stand with you,

and the Department of Justice will be reviewing on behalf of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I thank you.

Ms. FUDGE. Our Whip has joined us. Before he speaks, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Congressman HANK JOHNSON.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I thank my colleague, Congresswoman FUDGE, for organizing this Special Order, and also my Whip, STENY HOYER, for being intimately involved in this.

The right to vote is a fundamental right. And this right is under attack. It's the Tea Party Republicans that have raised the false specter of voter fraud at the polls. Study after study documents that most, if not, all voter fraud occurs during the absentee voter process. And the Tea Party Republicans have done nothing to alleviate that voter fraud.

Instead, they've declared open season on in-person voting.

Now, why would they do that? They have the nerve to claim that their voter ID laws will protect the elections that are allegedly riddled by fraud. But they're really trying to fix a problem that does not exist.

All across America oppressive voter suppression ID laws are propping up. My home State of Georgia is one of the States of shame. It has strict voter ID laws. And earlier this year, more than 30 other States introduced legislation to require government-issued IDs for voting.

The requirement that all voters present a government-issued photo ID, or if you live in Texas a concealed carry permit, before being able to cast a regular ballot will disproportionately disenfranchise minorities as well as seniors, the disabled, students, and poor people who are less likely to have or carry a photo ID.

These voter ID laws are a blatant attempt by Tea Party Republicans to influence the outcome of the upcoming elections, and we cannot let them get away with it.

We'll fight and fight hard to make sure that all voters eligible to vote can vote.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much.

Now, we would have the Whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER). Congressman HOYER is taking the lead on this as well, and we thank you for being here tonight.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my colleague from Ohio, Congresswoman FUDGE.

I'm honored to be on the floor with JOHN LEWIS, who came close to losing his life to make sure that Americans could register and could vote.

Mr. Speaker, we're a year away from an election, one that will shape the course of our Nation for years ahead. The choice we make will be pivotal. And in order to make certain that it reflects the direction our people want to take, we ought to do everything we can to ensure that all who have the right to cast a ballot can do so.

□ 2110

Equal access to the ballot is the most fundamental right we have as Americans. It is what preserves our democracy and instills confidence in our system of government. Some of our greatest national struggles have been over suffrage—from votes for African Americans and women to votes for the young people who risk their lives for us in uniform. The right to vote, however, is today, as we have heard by so many, under threat in a number of States seeking to place obstacles in front of minorities, low-income families, young people, and seniors seeking to exercise that basic right to vote.

They claim we need to crack down on an epidemic of voter fraud that does not exist. There is simply no evidence of any widespread voter fraud. As many as a quarter of African Americans do not have the necessary forms of identification now being required by some States. Data from the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice shows that African Americans and Latinos make use of early voting at a far higher rate than other groups, especially opportunities to vote on the Sunday before election day. At the same time, there has been an assault on voter registration.

The right to vote does not exist for political expediency. It is a constitutional right and a moral right for all of our citizens. It is the pride of America, this American franchise. For that reason, we are vigorously pursuing ways to protect an American's right to vote by drawing attention to efforts which attempt to restrict that right. We will be working closely with the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and with voting rights groups across the country. Throughout our history, Mr. Speaker, Americans have given their lives to protect the right to vote. It is worth fighting for. It is our fight.

I thank Congresswoman FUDGE for her leadership, and I thank all those who have spoken tonight and will be speaking out every day, every week, every month to ensure that every American not only has the right to vote, but does, in fact, have America's willingness to facilitate the casting of that vote.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, let me just close by saying this:

To all of the Governors in all of the States that have passed this legislation, please understand it is time for you to do the right thing.

To all of the Secretaries of State and all of the State legislators who have by design gone out and tried to keep predetermined people from voting, do the right thing.

Anybody who cares about democracy in this country or who cares about the reputation of this country and the way that we handle our business, please know that it is time to do the right thing. If you care about the generations that follow us, then do the right thing.

For the veterans who are coming back—who are homeless, who don't have addresses—for the people who don't drive, for the sick, for the disabled, for the elderly, for the children, do the right thing.

I would say to all of the people who have been on this floor tonight, we all understand the gravity of the problem. We are just saying to all of these States on the map of shame, it is time for them to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about voter suppression bills pending or already signed into law in a number of states. They have only one true purpose—to disenfranchise eligible voters.

This is a clear attempt to prevent certain predetermined segments of the population from exercising their right to vote. Students, the elderly, minorities and those for whom English is their second language are all targets.

Many of the bills, including one that was signed into law in my home state—Ohio, include the most drastic voting restrictions we have seen since before the Voting Rights Act.

These bills will not allow address changes at the polls and end volunteer-run registration drives. Twenty-one million citizens would be unable to vote because they do not have state-issued photo identification. We would say good-bye to same-day voter registration and hello to difficulty casting an absentee ballot.

There is no doubt that there is a concerted voter suppression effort underway in this nation. In the first three quarters of 2011, nineteen new restrictive laws and two new executive actions were enacted. At least forty-two bills are still pending, and at least sixty-eight more were introduced but failed.

If these bills were to become law, the effects would be catastrophic. These new laws would make it significantly harder for more than five million eligible voters to cast ballots in 2012.

Under these pending voter suppression laws, we can only imagine how many Americans would not have had the opportunity to vote in 2008. The two-hundred and two thousand voters who registered through voter registration drives in 2008 would find it extremely difficult or impossible to register under new laws. The sixty thousand voters who registered in 2008 through Election Day registration would not have registered or voted under pending laws.

Think about how many felons had their right to vote restored in 2008. Many of the pending state bills would make it virtually impossible for hundreds of thousands of rehabilitated citizens to ever vote again.

These numbers prove that votes will be suppressed in 2012. These laws are nothing but a ploy to give Republicans a political edge by suppressing the votes of many who voted Democratic in 2008.

The proponents of these voter suppression bills claim wide-spread voter fraud. I am here to tell you there is no truth to their assertion. A statewide study in Ohio found that out of nine million votes cast, there were only four instances of ineligible persons voting or attempting to vote in 2002 and 2004.

An investigation of fraud allegations in Wisconsin in 2004 led to the prosecution of 0.0007 percent of voters. From 2002 to 2005,

the Justice Department found, only five people were convicted for voting multiple times. Millions of voters cast votes each election. The minimal amount of voter fraud that occurs does not warrant the restrictive bills that are moving in the states.

I fought Ohio's voter suppression bill, HB 194. Now voters will cast their vote to decide whether or not HB 194 will become law. We placed the peoples' right to vote back into their hands. I also fought Ohio's voter photo ID legislation. Due to pressure, the Republicans decided to delay moving forward with the legislation. I will continue to fight to protect voter's rights across the nation. We cannot be silent.

I urge you to speak out against what we know to be a concerted effort to suppress votes. People died for our right to vote. People were slain to create the franchise we enjoy today. I will not let their deaths be in vain.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### AMERICAN BEDROCK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANNA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always my privilege and an honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor. As is often the case, I come here and hear the end of the debate that has gone on before me and feel compelled to address it from a bit of a different perspective.

As I listen to the gentlemen and the gentleladies talk about the right to vote, I think it would be important for us to remind the body that there has to be a qualified voter. It isn't that everybody has a right to vote. You have to be old enough for one thing, and you need to be an American citizen for another. As I've watched things change over my adult lifetime, the integrity of the vote has been damaged.

The gentleman from Maryland made the statement that there is no evidence of any widespread voter fraud. I know that it's difficult to put this into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Mr. Speaker, but I would hold this up as, let me just call this, evidence number one:

This is an acorn. It's an acorn that I carry in my pocket every day. I carry it there every day to remind me of what that organization ACORN has done to the integrity of the vote in the United States of America. How much more widespread would you have to be than operations going on in nearly all, if not all, of the 50 States—the major cities—and millions of dollars spent to pay people to go out and fraudulently register voters? There are over 400,000 fraudulent voter registrations that this acorn symbolizes that they have admitted to going out and purchasing on a commission basis: We're going to pay you to get these fraudulent voter registrations. Oh, they can be legitimate, but they can also be fraudulent, and ACORN didn't differentiate between

the two. They just paid out in commissions. They violated the laws of the State of Nevada, and they violated the laws of the State of New York.

This Congress shut down the funding to ACORN, and the national organization of ACORN collapsed. So for the gentleman to say—and I quote—there is no evidence of any widespread voter fraud, I think there is massive evidence of widespread voter registration fraud, and from that flowed fraudulent votes as well.

We have watched the integrity of the voter registration and the election system be undermined over the last generation in almost a calculated way. Issue after issue has eroded the integrity of the qualified voter in these ways: motor voter during the Clinton years. If you show up for a driver's license—and we know how well that works. How many of the—I think it's 15 of the 19—September 11 hijackers had driver's licenses, that breeder document for false identification? You show up for a driver's license, and they say to you in their native language, Do you want to register to vote? If you answer in the affirmative in any language, they put you down and register you to vote.

People don't understand that they're bound by perjury laws. We don't know about the prosecutions that may or may not be taking place. It's not considered to be as serious an offense by, let me just say, the Department of Justice as it should be. After all, they have their prosecutorial discretion. They have testified before the Judiciary Committee, where I serve, that they select which laws they want to enforce and which ones they do not want to enforce.

With regard to voting rights in the civil rights division of the Department of Justice, we know how that works. They have a policy that has been testified to under oath under several different scenarios that they will not move a voting rights case if it damages a minority. That's the policy of the Department of Justice, and it's the policy of the most recently departed Loretta King, who found that, in Kinston, North Carolina, that voted like 70 percent of the communities in America to have nonpartisan local elections for mayor and city council, they voted to abolish the partisanship and go to nonpartisan elections. So that would be a common practice, and 70 percent of the cities and municipalities have done that. But in Kinston, North Carolina, they were forbidden by the Department of Justice because, if you read the Department of Justice's agent's letter on that—and that was Loretta King—African Americans—no, she said “blacks”—wouldn't know who to vote for if they didn't have a “D” beside their names. Therefore, she forbid them from abolishing partisan elections in a city council and mayor's race in Kinston, North Carolina. That's one example.

There is another example of the intimidation that took place with the