

to working with the women and with the fathers involved in a very difficult situation.

We commemorate that today we honor those who worked so hard for these crisis pregnancy centers. My wife and I are proud to have been two people who helped start the one in Rockford, Illinois.

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE ACT

(Mr. BROUN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. The greatest moral issue that this Nation faces today is the killing of 4,000 babies every single day through abortion. God cannot and will not continue to bless this land while this atrocious practice continues.

The first bill I introduced in this Congress when I was elected in 2007, and in every single Congress since then, has been my Sanctity of Human Life Act that scientifically describes the beginning of life when a spermatozoon, or the sperm cell, enters the cell wall of the ovum, the egg, to create a one-cell human being, the zygote.

Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely critical, if we want to continue to expect God to bless America, that we stop murdering these unborn babies, and I will continue to fight to do so. And I hope my colleagues will see the reality that these are human beings. It's not a glob of tissue; it's a human being created by God, and we have to protect their lives.

LIVES LOST TO ABORTION

(Mr. LAMBORN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening in recognition of the over 55 million American lives lost to abortion since the passage of Roe v. Wade 39 years ago.

In President Obama's statement celebrating the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, he emphasized the principle that government should not intrude on private family matters. Ironically, on Friday, the Obama administration made an unprecedented decision to require all U.S. employers to cover the cost of contraception, including emergency contraceptive drugs, despite the protest from faith-based institutions such as Catholic hospitals and universities. This is a violation of citizens' religious convictions. It will force the organizations to either violate their deeply held views or pay a heavy fine and terminate health insurance plans.

Every human life has inherent value because he or she is made in the image of God. I will continue to fight for the right to life for America's youngest pre-born citizens and for freeing taxpayers from being forced to pay for abortions.

WORDS MATTER

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a gentleman by the name of Andrew Adler located in Atlanta, Georgia, and writing for an Atlanta, Georgia, newspaper offered instructions to the prime minister of Israel on how to protect that great nation. He suggested an attack on Hezbollah and Hamas and an attack on Iran. And then he gave number three: Give the go ahead for U.S.-based Mossad agents to take out a President deemed unfriendly to the nation of Israel. That President, I need not say, happens to be the President of the United States now. Words matter.

Mr. Adler has been called upon to apologize, and he did. But he has brought shame to Jewish Americans, to Americans and Israel. And, frankly, the latitude in which he thought he could talk about assassinating the President of the United States without in any way a suggestion of, if you will, challenge, is an outrage and disgrace.

I believe in the First Amendment, but words do matter. We should come together and be unified as a Nation, find ways to disagree with each other without raising words that are hostile and devastating. I beg for this Nation's leaders to stop calling names and talk about policies and how to build this Nation up.

I'm outraged, Mr. Adler. An apology is not enough.

□ 1930

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HOUR: VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWEIKERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject matter of this special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, tonight we are here on the floor of the House of Representatives on the eve of the State of the Union by President Barack Obama, the first African American President of the United States and some 46 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act which made his election and ours possible. And I'm pleased to be joined by members of the Congressional Black Caucus this evening for this Special Order.

I'd like to yield such time as he might consume to the gentleman from New York, who I believe is the most senior member of the Ways and Means

Committee, a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mr. CHARLIE RANGEL.

Mr. RANGEL. Let me thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for having the foresight to try to protect our Constitution and the voting rights that all Americans are entitled to. Before I get into the subject matter, I would like to really first thank the Speaker for pointing out the guidelines that we would have as relates to the decorum of Members in the House of Representatives. I think it's well heeded and we can walk away with some pride. I just assume that included in that was not to make derogatory remarks about the President of the United States. But recognizing that the whole body and the whole world has already spoken about this issue, then I don't think there is any need for me to elaborate.

Because of the reputation of the United States of America, no matter what we find in our fiscal system or whatever problems we have day-to-day and year-to-year, we still remain the source of hope and inspiration for people all over the world. People teach their kids that if they can only get to America this is the place where you can come from the depth of poverty, and with hard work and education there's no limit to how far you can go.

And while we have fought over the years in order to get equality for those that came as immigrants to this country or slaves, we do recognize that in this country, this country offers all of us the best opportunity in the world to be able to provide a better life for ourselves, our kids and for society generally.

Madam Chairlady, when the early sixties was there, and I marched from Selma to Birmingham, Alabama, it was 54 miles. But, quite honestly, I don't know whether I've admitted this publicly or not, I had no idea that I was going to march 54 miles. I thought I could go down, have my picture taken and come back and say I was with Andy Young, JOHN LEWIS, Ralph Bunche, and Dr. King. But, somehow, I got caught up in it, and I was cussing every step of the way wondering how did I get caught up walking through all of these dark streets and being insulted.

But much later, when I heard Lyndon Johnson say those words, that theme that had directed us emotionally and patriotically that "we shall overcome," I felt so proud, notwithstanding my lack of knowledge of the importance of the issue, that I did march. Then I found out that the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act weren't just something that made minorities feel good, it made Americans feel good. And the ripple effect of this throughout the world was that we were able to say, see, we told you that in the United States, it's not what we want, but in the United States of America we are working toward full equality.

Now, even today when we give assistance to a country that aspires to have a democracy, more often than not they come here to see how we were able to do it, and we send people to watch what they are doing. And they listen to Americans teaching them what equality is and how to avoid fraud and how everybody should have an opportunity to participate. And notwithstanding what happens in America, we used to have a sense of pride that even though we have our problems we're still respected throughout the world. And what is happening today in certain States that have had a long history of discrimination, it seems as though now they want to take this backward step to cause it to be difficult for people to vote.

Why in the world would this great country want people not to vote? What could it be to have more and more people express themselves? You go to countries that have 80 and 90 percent of the population participating in this great democracy, and when you vote you care more about the direction in which your country is going. God knows that in America today with the performance of the Congress, if the people were more involved we'd do a better job and do it in a hurry. But having said that, these States are now changing their laws to make it difficult for people to vote.

Even though I have my own suspicions as to why, if you lay out the facts and see what is happening, which States are they and what prohibitions are they putting? They're asking for ID. Well, do we have cases of people misusing ID? The Attorney General doesn't know of any. And then they're going after those who allow participation on Sundays, then they're going after communities with a high number of poor people, then they go into minority communities, and then they ask older people who have no reason for ID that they have to do it. And people who fought so hard for these rights that were given to them now find themselves, in this late stage, being denied the right to vote.

It is so embarrassing. Not only is it not the right thing to do as Americans, but how can we continue to send people to foreign and developing countries as being the major spokespeople for democracy, when right in this country we are prohibiting—not prohibiting—but discouraging people from participating in the right to vote?

I don't know whether the color of the President or the fact that this President has received record-breaking participation by the very same people that they're making it difficult to vote, but I tell you for you taking the opportunity to bring the attention of this to the Congress, and therefore to the Nation, for you to be able, with the Congressional Black Caucus, to say that we're not protecting our rights, we're protecting our Constitution, we're protecting our country, and there is no question in my mind that we felt bet-

ter as a people when we were able to overcome the obstacles that were placed.

□ 1940

So let me thank you and my fellow colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus for saying we can vote. They can't hurt us. But it's a better country with everybody, regardless of their color, their age, where they live or how much money they have in the bank, to be able to say, in our country, at this time, we have to move forward, and we cannot find ourselves where we were 60 and 70 years ago.

So thank you so much for this opportunity, and for all of the Members who have taken time this evening to say that we shall indeed overcome for the length of the Constitution of this great Nation.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. RANGEL. And thank you again, as a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, for reminding the American people why we're called the conscience of the Congress. Thank you for those words.

I'd like now to yield such time as she might consume to the gentlelady from Ohio, who for the last Congress chaired these Special Orders and who is a leader on so many, many issues and whose district I believe the CBC will again be traveling to to help protect the rights of voters in Ohio, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE.

Mrs. FUDGE. Let me thank my colleague who comes down to this floor every week. I know what it's like. I thank you for being the anchor for the CBC hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the covert voter suppression effort under way in the United States of America. This effort might have begun as a stealth operation, but my colleagues, organizations across the Nation, and I will ensure that Americans are informed and protected, such that voters are well prepared for the gimmicks under way to keep them from casting their ballots in 2012.

During 2011, 34 States introduced legislation that would require voters to show a photo ID to cast a ballot. Approximately 13 States introduced bills to end Election Day and same-day voter registration. As many as nine States introduced bills to reduce early voting, and four States proposed draconian reductions in absentee voting opportunities. Two States took steps backward by reversing prior executive actions that make it easier for citizens with past felony convictions to restore their voting rights.

For many years, America has been described as a beacon of light for the world; the model of democracy and the home of fair elections. As a Nation, we have always rejected voter intimidation at polling places in foreign nations. We frown upon nations that limit the right of its citizens to vote. Yet we now face the same issues that fall disproportionately on the same

class of voters that these very laws were designed to protect—the elderly, the disabled, students, and minorities.

I will not stand by, Mr. Speaker, and watch silently as State legislatures attempt to compromise the right of citizens to vote. And as a caucus, we will not be silent. We will not stand by idly as decades of struggle for equal voting rights are trampled upon. We will not turn our backs on voters who now face the erosion of the very premise upon which our Nation is built, and that is the right to vote and to representation.

I am proud to report, however, that 2012 is looking much better than 2011. Connecticut's Secretary of State and Governor introduced a package to streamline voter registration and increase access to absentee voting. In Florida, a bill was proposed to repeal legislation that shortened early voting periods and restricted voter registration drives. A bill introduced in Nebraska that would require a photo ID to vote was removed from the legislature's agenda. In Washington, a bipartisan bill was introduced that would allow 16-year-olds to preregister to vote. The Department of Justice rejected South Carolina's photo ID law, and just last week a circuit court in Wisconsin heard a case against Wisconsin's voter ID law. It looks like 2012 will be a very good year for the protection of voting rights.

These attempts to restrict voting are especially hard on young folks. More than 1 million students attend colleges, universities, and technical schools in the State of Texas alone, but because of the State's new voter ID law, none will be allowed to use their student ID cards to cast a ballot. Texans, however, can show a gun permit and be allowed to vote, but a college student attempting to use their school-issued ID will be denied.

Earlier this month, Bill O'Reilly vehemently defended laws like the one in Texas. He said if students don't know they can vote absentee, they're too stupid to vote. You're in college, but you're too stupid to vote? What an insult.

During the Jim Crow era, people said African Americans were too stupid to vote. If you were black and you couldn't count the number of jelly beans in a jar or tell the person at the ballot box how many bubbles were in a bar of soap, you were too stupid to vote.

We refuse to return to those days. Stand with us. Protect the franchise. Protect the right to vote.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, for those very strong words, and thank you for the ray of hope by pointing out some of the States that are reversing some of those laws that are making it easier for their voters to vote.

I would now like to yield to the former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, a leader not only in California but in the country, a person who has always been the conscience of

the CBC as we are the conscience of the Congress, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much. I thank the gentlelady for her kind remarks, and I also thank Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN for her leadership. She serves as the first vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and has led on so many issues in this House on behalf of our country and on behalf of her constituents. Thank you very much.

Let me also take a moment to thank Congresswoman FUDGE and Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT and Chairman RANGEL for their leadership in defending the most basic element of our democracy—the right to vote. I'd also like to thank our Congressional Black Caucus chair, EMANUEL CLEAVER, for his focus on this very critical issue. His leadership is making such a difference on so many important issues in our country.

The right to vote is our most fundamental right that guarantees and preserves all other legal rights. When Americans lose their right to vote, that endangers their ability to defend further attacks on their rights.

The assault on voter rights continues in 2012. In this election year, a coordinated campaign designed to block access to the polls to tens of millions of Americans threatens to undermine our democracy and change election outcomes. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, it's no secret which communities these laws are designed to disenfranchise—communities of color, students, elderly Americans, impoverished families, and the disabled.

Let me say that the Republican legislators and Governors who are pushing these antivoter laws know exactly what they are doing. They saw the election results of 2008, with the surge of voter participation from Americans who had never voted before. They see the rising tide of Americans who seek to change their country by doing their basic civic duty on Election Day. Instead of embracing change, they are desperately trying to avoid change by undermining our voting process.

These Republican legislators are proposing partisan laws that require voters to show a government-approved photo ID before voting. Those who are truly concerned about voter fraud have plenty of actual, documented problems to take on. Why aren't they going after those who spread false information meant to trick voters or public officials who improperly purge eligible voters or political operatives who tamper with election equipment and forms? Instead, they all are pushing laws designed to change election outcomes by reducing voting, repressing turnout, and turning the clock back.

Now, I have an aunt who is 100 years old, who was born at a time when records were not kept like they are today. How in the world would my aunt know where to start to find her birth certificate to be eligible to qualify for

a government ID? How can I ask her to pay to do the research so she can figure out where her birth certificate may be and then pay to get a government ID to vote? Outrageous.

One hundred years ago, my aunt did not have the right to vote. Thanks to the hard work of those who came before us, my aunt witnessed the expansion of voting rights to women with the 19th Amendment and the protection of African American and other minority voters with the Voting Rights Act. These regressive laws seek to turn my aunt back to where she was a century ago when she could not vote and her fundamental right to fully participate in our democratic society was cut off, mind you, just cut off by unjust laws.

These partisan laws are shameful and a disgrace to our country. These anti-democratic efforts have no place in a modern democracy, and we must unmask these shameful attempts to disenfranchise voters.

□ 1950

We encourage democracy and voting rights all around the world. I was an observer in the first election in South Africa where President Nelson Mandela was elected. I was an observer in the nineties in Nigeria. I witnessed long lines of people waiting patiently to vote. People believed and said to me that in America voting was encouraged rather than discouraged, so we need to stop these partisan efforts that strike at the core of our democracy. It really is, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN, fundamentally anti-American.

We have to win this war against voters. We should be about dismantling and reducing barriers so we can reignite their hope for the American Dream.

I want to, again, thank you for your leadership, and Congresswomen FUDGE and JACKSON LEE, and BOBBY SCOTT and Mr. RANGEL and the entire Congressional Black Caucus for their calls and their hard work to protect the right to vote for all citizens across this Nation.

We must protect voters from these attempts to deny access to the heart of our democratic process. We need to move forward and encourage more voter participation. People need to know that they have a stake in this system and in this democracy. These laws were designed to stop that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congresswoman LEE. And just to underscore what you have shared with us this evening, I don't usually quote from Politico, but let me read the last sentence of one of their articles. It says, the framers bequeathed us a Constitution intended to create a more perfect union. Every time an eligible voter is denied the right to vote we are left that much further from achieving that goal.

Thank you again for joining us this evening.

And now I want to yield such time as he might consume to one of our out-

standing constitutional experts and attorneys in the CBC, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT from Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands for the opportunity to speak. And today I rise in opposition to an unfortunate trend that seems to be creeping up all over the country, laws that add unnecessary complications to the process of voter registration and the process of voting.

Now, some of these initiatives include photo ID laws, reduction in time to vote or to register to vote, laws complicating the rules for running voter registration drives.

Now, none of these little schemes prevent individuals from voting, but the unnecessary complications guarantee that many will not get their paperwork in on time and, as a consequence, many will not be able to vote. In some States, those few votes can make the difference in a presidential election.

Now, we need to protect the right to vote, not add unnecessary complications that will result in fewer people voting. But we see all over the country efforts to reduce the Election Day registration. In those States that have allowed it for decades, those who could have registered on Election Day will find that they cannot vote.

In States that allow early voting, we're seeing efforts to reduce the number of days of early voting, meaning that some people may not be able to get their votes in as they could have with the longer period.

In some States the rules for voter registration drives are becoming more onerous, so much so that groups that have traditionally conducted voter registration drives, such as the League of Women Voters, are having second thoughts about conducting those drives under the new rules, and that will mean fewer people will be registered to vote.

And many States are imposing for the first time a requirement that voters display a specific voter ID. This scheme that is so slanted that, as has been previously stated, some government-issued IDs are acceptable and some are not. Texas proposed to accept the concealed weapons permit as acceptable government-issued ID, but not student IDs from a State college.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these voter ID requirements are a solution in search of a problem. There is no credible evidence that in-person voter fraud, which is the only kind of fraud that the photo ID would prevent, is any problem around the country. In fact, multiple studies have found that virtually no cases of in-person voter fraud can be found.

And the requirement of voter ID in subjecting people to that time and expense will guarantee that many will not get their paperwork in on time. There are complications that can occur when you're trying to get that paperwork done. Some of the elderly have

never gotten a photo ID and wouldn't know where to start. Many who are adopted may not know where to find a birth certificate. Many counties—for the elderly people, some counties have lost their records and the records aren't available.

And it produces bizarre results, such as the nuns who were prohibited from voting because they didn't have photo ID, even though the election officials knew them personally.

In Virginia, we have an exception to the photo ID. You have to present a photo ID, but if you don't have one, you can sign an affidavit under pains of a felony and go ahead and vote right now. But unfortunately, even in Virginia they're trying to eliminate that exception and require people to go through the time and expense of getting photo ID if they don't have one.

Now, if we're going to look for problems in the voting process maybe we ought to look at Iowa that just certified, had announced that one person had won the Republican Caucuses one day and a couple of days later certified results that another one had won. And there are public reports that suggest that really nobody knows who won. I mean, if you want to look for some voter irregularities, maybe we ought to look at that.

Or maybe we ought to look at the candidate who tried to become a candidate on the Virginia Republican Presidential Primary this year. He has publicly stated that petition signatures submitted on behalf of his campaign, of those signatures, hundreds were, in fact, bogus. And if they had not been caught, he would have qualified for the ballot. But fortunately, it has been ascertained that so many were bogus signatures that he, in fact, did not qualify for the Virginia ballot.

But as we see all over the country, efforts to reduce Election Day registration and other forms of ease in voting are making it possible for many people to lose those rights. While the situations like Iowa and in Virginia, where it's clear that those situations need scrutiny, there is no evidence that in-person voter fraud is a problem anywhere in the United States.

Voting is not an arbitrary, inconsequential act. The cumulative effect of individuals voting elects our government officials who directly create our laws and policies. It is important that we ensure that every eligible voter is given the opportunity to vote, free from unnecessary barriers and schemes. Those schemes that erect barriers to the right to vote are unfair in our democracy.

And I thank the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands for giving us the opportunity to make these statements.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank you for joining us and for pointing out some of that data and helping to explain to the American public the injustice that's being done by these voter restrictions on voting and restrictions on registration.

We're also joined by another fighter for justice and equality, a strong voice in the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I'd like to thank Dr. CHRISTENSEN, which I enjoy calling her that because she has been of such value and service to this Congress and to this body, the Congressional Black Caucus, and thank her for her leadership in convening this very important discussion on voter protection.

I'm very delighted to be joined, and I thank him very much, by Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, who has served and we are serving on the Judiciary Committee. And I know that he remembers that in about 2006, 2007, after years of rumors of the Voting Rights Act ending, we clarified it by coming together in a bipartisan manner and over months of hearings, convinced a then, I believe, Republican and moving into a Democratic Congress, but a bipartisan Congress, that the Voting Rights Act was needed, and it needed to be reauthorized in certain sections.

And so our stand today is to reinforce that issue. And so I would like to thank, again, Congressman RANGEL, who so movingly told of his long journey and walk to support the Voting Rights Act, Congresswoman FUDGE, who has been a champion in her State in Ohio, Congresswoman LEE, and then Congressman SCOTT, who all bring to the table a personal story about voter protection.

□ 2000

But I must make mention of our friend Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who is the epitome of the civil rights movement around the idea of voter protection and enhancement. Many of us are not aware of Mr. FILNER, who was one of the Freedom Riders and celebrated the Freedom Riders in the last year, their 50 years. My colleague Congressman AL GREEN, who led the NAACP in Houston during times when we were under siege as it relates to voting opportunities.

And I remember working for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the South in the aftermath in the 1970s of the Voting Rights Act actually going to many States, from North Carolina to South Carolina to Georgia and Alabama, where African Americans were still not registered, had still not had the full impact. I remember walking miles with Prairie View University students to allow the students to vote.

So this is a cause for which we have been on a long journey, and it saddens me that we are here again today fighting for voter protection in the year 2012 as we look to our Presidential elections.

I might offer to my colleagues the words of Barbara Jordan, who could not have come to Congress if it had not been for the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Sitting in the Judiciary

Committee she offered these words: "I believe hyperbole would not be fictional and would not overstate the solemnness I feel right now. My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total."

She said that of course during the impeachment hearings of Richard Nixon, but really the point was that she felt that the Constitution breathed life, if you will, into the rights of Americans, and the Constitution spoke to the voting rights of African Americans and others through the 14th and 15th Amendments.

But over the years, we had not been protected. And so the Congress, through the leadership and sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose monument is magnificent, they passed the Voting Rights Act. The constitutionality was challenged in 1966. It barely got passed. And the Supreme Court said this: Congress has found that case-by-case litigation was inadequate to combat widespread and persistent discrimination in voting.

This is what they found over the years in the Deep South; that it was constant, it was ongoing because of the inordinate amount of time and energy required to overcome the obstructionist tactics invariably encountered in these lawsuits. After enduring nearly a century of systemic or systematic resistance to the 15th Amendment, Congress might well decide to shift the advantage of time and inertia from the perpetrators of evil to its victims. That was a landmark case in 1966, *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, the Attorney General of the United States, to reaffirm the Voting Rights Act of 1966.

Here we are now almost 50 years plus where we are fighting this case again, and I might add, in not too friendly a climate. First of all, fraud is offered, and I notice that my colleague mentioned the unfortunate facts or the circumstances in Iowa where one Republican presidential candidate was declared a winner and then now another. And I did not hear voices being raised about whether there was fraud. Maybe it was a miscount, a mistake. But you didn't hear the outrage that we have heard over the seeming increase, or the effort to increase, the votes of poor people and minorities, and in particular Latinos and African Americans.

Might I just say with a sense of pride, the Honorable Barbara Jordan added Texas to the Voting Rights Act coverage by adding language minorities in I believe about 1978.

But the thought that fraud is bad and should be prosecuted, but a photo ID does not prevent voter impersonation, that it doesn't work—requiring a photo ID amounts to discrimination. Eleven percent of the entire voting-eligible population, 2.1 million, do not have a government-issued photo ID. You're discriminating against them. Twenty-five percent of eligible African American voters do not have a qualified voter ID. A 2006 nationwide study of voting-age citizens by the Brennan

Center for Justice of the New York University School of Law found that African Americans are more than three times as likely as Caucasians to lack a government-issued ID.

You talk to many of our seniors and they were born with midwives. My mother, God rest her soul, we could not, as long as we looked for her birth certificate, could not find it, but she did have a voter registration card. Nationwide, 18 percent of eligible voters over 65 lack an ID. Voter ID laws are costly and add to the deficit. Missouri estimates that the ID law would cost the State over \$20 million to implement, and it goes on to say North Carolina, \$14 million.

This is a shame on us. This is a pox on our House. And it is a pox on our House because fraud cannot be documented. As my colleague indicated how ironic it is that a student ID, students at State colleges, private colleges, historically black colleges, Hispanic-leaning colleges can't use a credible ID that colleges take great pride or great efforts to secure. Photo ID. Young people who we want to see cherish the democracy of this country can not in fact use their ID. But yet a gun ID can be used.

Just a few weeks ago in the Judiciary Committee—somewhat related—we were trying to pass legislation that says if you have a gun ID in Georgia, you can use your gun permit in another State. We're willing to give all of these rights to those carrying a gun ID, which may in fact jeopardize our law enforcement officers in all of the different States by not knowing who's in there carrying a gun permit.

But yet the sacred and simple act of being able to vote for a person of your choosing causes the ire of so many State legislatures who, after the 2010 election and the misrepresentation that there was fraud in the 2008 election, maybe because we elected the first African American President, or some crisis generated this response, we have this kind of map that shows practically 40 States, it looks like, all but 11, that require photo ID, that photo ID is requested, that photo ID legislation is proposed.

Congresswoman, I ask on what basis have we now taken the Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, and the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act to do it?

Let me just share these points as I come to a close and ask that we continue the efforts.

I look forward to a voter protection meeting by the Congressional Black Caucus in Houston. The State of Texas has the voter ID law that is now being pre-cleared. I understand that all of my colleagues are in the middle of redistricting, but let me just say this is not in any way promoting Texas, but I believe that we may be the singular case that is going to ascertain the integrity of the Voting Rights Act and voter protection.

Right now Texas is in three courts: the Supreme Court, the District Court

of Appeals here in the District of Columbia, and the San Antonio Federal Court. We are fighting on three different levels.

I might say this without any punitive comments intended. We had an interim plan, and this is under the Voting Rights Act, that one person, one vote. And Congresswoman, I think it is important to note that the Voting Rights Act protects all Americans. Its premise is one vote, one person. Its premise is not fraud but opportunity.

So when we have the redistricting and some sections of the Voting Rights Act protect the idea of one person, one vote, we take these cases not for personal promotion, meaning Members of Congress and State legislators, but to ensure the integrity of the vote.

So when the court ruled in San Antonio just briefly that the plan did not work, that the State of Texas wrote and gave us a new plan, the State of Texas went to the Supreme Court—not the individuals trying to protect the right of voters—went to the Supreme Court to stay that plan.

Well, the Supreme Court did render a decision. We're still in the midst of our confusion. But I just have to put this on the record. The Supreme Court assessed us, the ones who did not appeal, \$18,000 to pay for printing. For those of us who are lawyers, we are simply questioning in wonderment how you can charge individuals who did not take the case up to the Supreme Court, who were being guided by the Federal Court, who had a plan and assessed us \$18,000.

I simply say here is another way that you can not protect voting, because inevitably, those who are on the side of the Voting Rights Act are not rich. We inevitably in many instances are not the State.

□ 2010

It's the State coming against those who are trying to say, "One vote, one person." I bring this up just as I close.

Let me just say that, in the course of the hearings that we had in reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, we discovered that there were problems with voting across the country. In 2004, nearly 4,500 people reported problems with ballots that were coming to them; 1,000 people reported voting intimidation; 7,000 reported registration problems.

Also, as you well know, the status of voting laws now, meaning the voting ID or voter identification, limits the kind of voter ID you can use. It excludes the most common forms of identification—student IDs, Social Security cards—and they offer no alternatives. There are changes requiring proof of citizenship as a condition for voter registration, limitations or the outright elimination of early voting opportunities, and barriers to first-time voters by suggesting that there is no same-day registration.

So I would simply argue that this is an important Special Order that you

have tonight. What I feel in my heart is that we have to educate the public. They have to raise their level of, not anxiety, but of cause, in that they have a cause. They've got to get their marching shoes on again. They've got to get their shoes of being the carriers of justice as those civil rights legends and heroes did. They've got to get like the movie "The Help" when those domestics, those people who work for others, walked in the Montgomery Bus Boycott because they were trying to do for others. So I want to thank you for allowing me to share with you this evening.

I also want to indicate that this very fine letter that was sent by Members of Congress to the Attorney General on July 25, 2011, should be upheld; that of these voter ID laws that may suppress the vote, we want to have voter protection by having a vigorous review of all of these laws, and one of them happens to be the voter ID requirement in the State of Texas.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in an opportunity to share and in an opportunity to tell a message to our colleagues that the justice of voting is justice for everyone and that the protection of voting is the protection of voting for everyone.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank the gentlelady for those strong words.

Again, I'm going to go back to the article in Politico because everyone has made reference to the charges of fraud. In this article, it reads, "official and academic studies have consistently shown that the chances of being hit by lightning are greater than the likely incidence of such fraud."

So today, as we prepare for the elections in November of this year, we have seen an unprecedented—at least unprecedented since August of 1965—attack on the rights of Americans to vote. As you've heard, these attacks have taken many forms: expanding bans that prevent felons from voting; cutting election administration budgets in States; curtailing early voting, something that was used very effectively in previous elections; eliminating same-day registration; intimidating voter registration by some groups, which extends in some places to intimidation on Election Day; imposing strict ID requirements; creating barriers to getting the required ID; and creating barriers to voting by students in schools outside of their States.

Again, the voter fraud claims are bogus, and as our chairman, EMANUEL CLEAVER, said in testimony before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary late last year, "The laws are solutions in search of problems, especially when it comes to voter ID, because there is basically no evidence of fraud." Many studies, as I've said, have supported that statement.

With an estimated 11 percent of Americans not having IDs that would meet the requirement, it is projected that these new attacks on the rights of American citizens to vote will prevent

many millions of people—mostly Democrats, mostly minorities and the elderly—from voting and could affect as many as 171 electoral votes. It is clear to me, whether racially based or not, that this is a direct attempt not only to undermine the election process but is a specific attempt to derail what surely would be and ought to be the reelection of Barack Obama.

The CBC is speaking out as is the NAACP, but I'm still waiting for the cries of many of the good people of this country. This is an egregious injustice and a threat to democracy and to the stability of our Nation, and it must not be allowed to continue. The Congressional Black Caucus has met with officials of the Justice Department; and as Congresswoman JACKSON LEE has stated, the CBC has sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder, which has over 100 signatures from other Members, registering our grave concern over these laws and proposed laws, urging that the Department of Justice examine them and ensure that the rights of voters are protected.

In March, we will take up the torch of those who marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to continue to fight for equal rights and, together with the NAACP and other partners, to begin a voter protection tour to key cities in order to call attention to the injustice; to mobilize efforts to help individuals get the required ID or vote where there still remains some early voting; and to continue to press the Justice Department to do all that is in its authority to protect this right that so many fought, sacrificed, and died for.

As Congresswoman JACKSON LEE showed, this is the map. It's called the "Map of Shame." Only 11 States are without voter ID laws or are requesting one or have legislation proposed. How will we ever be able to lead and speak for the rights of the disenfranchised in other parts of the world? That was something raised by Congressman RANGEL as we began the Special Order. Where will we get the moral authority if this travesty is allowed to exist and if we undermine this very fundamental right, the right to vote?

Already the undue influence of big money from undisclosed donors is influencing elections. Already the ugly specter of racism has been raised to divide our country and to misinform and inflame some segments of our country. This is not the country that we want to be. The Voting Rights Act was passed in August of 1965, and at that time, it ended over a century of denial of the right to vote to African Americans in the South and to Latinos in the Southwest as well. In voting rights, as with health care reform, as someone said earlier, we are not going back.

I would like to just take a few minutes of the time we have left to call attention to a crisis in my district, in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Last Wednesday, January 18, we suffered an economic earthquake with the announcement

that the HOVENSA oil refinery—it's either the second or the third largest oil refinery in the Western Hemisphere—is going to close in the middle of February. Now, we're a small community—110,000 throughout the entire Virgin Islands—and we're maybe about 55,000 on the Island of St. Croix, so a hit of over 2,000 jobs is a big hit to our economy. Those are the direct jobs. Of the people who work either for HOVENSA or their subcontractors on the site, there will continue to be about 100 employees for oil storage facilities, but the impact will reverberate throughout that entire community. Businesses that rely on HOVENSA from some of their suppliers—hotels and restaurants and even some of our private schools—are wondering how they are going to survive and keep their doors open when HOVENSA closes.

We are looking at a number of issues, and we still have a lot of questions that we need to ask, but I wanted to bring this to the attention of my colleagues because this is a severe crisis. As all of our States have been, we were already having layoffs and having to cut salaries and impose austerity measures on our population. The closing of this refinery is a major hit, and it has left my community reeling. So I ask for your prayers, and at the appropriate time I will probably come and ask for your assistance on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues Congressman RANGEL, Congresswoman FUDGE, Congressman SCOTT, Congresswoman LEE, and Congresswoman JACKSON LEE for joining me in this Special Order to speak to the issue of voter protection for the people of this country—the protection of a fundamental right that must not be abridged.

I would be happy to yield to my colleague from Texas if she would like to have some more time.

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Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. First, I want to speak to the gentlelady's last comment and say that you have been a champion for the Virgin Islands. I have had the privilege of having several meetings there. They are generous people, they are our neighbors, and so I personally want to say, experiencing and understanding the impact of the loss of a major entity is something many of us have gone through.

In this instance I wanted to say, yes, we will stand with you and be of help. I'm introducing legislation that deals with trying to look at the energy industry in a way to help it grow in a fair way, to be environmentally safe, and I know that you are certainly someone who is a champion of the environment but have found that that business is served economically, and I want to make sure that we have these kinds of industries, and they are not mutually exclusive. I don't have the facts of what has generated this action, but we need to be helpful.

My legislation talks about using the energy industry to also support improving the environment, and I think that creates jobs as well. So I just want to say that I look forward to working with you and thank you for bringing that issue to our attention, because voter protection gives people the opportunity for expressing their views. We know that the opportunity for work and for jobs is crucial as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the need to protect democracy, to protect the voice of the American people, and to ensure the right to vote continues to be treated as a right under the Constitution rather than being treated as though it is privilege.

I am joined by my colleagues here today to call on all Americans to reject and denounce tactics and measures that have absolutely no place in our democracy. I call on African-Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans, as well as Asian-American voters to band together to fight for their right to vote and to work together to understand their voting rights which are granted to citizens of our nation by our laws and our Constitution.

I call on these citizens to stand against harassment and intimidation, to vote in the face of such adversity. The most effective way to curb tactics of intimidation and harassment is to vote. Is to stand together to fight against any measures that would have the effect of preventing every eligible citizen from being able to vote. Voting ensures active participation in democracy.

As a Member of this body, I firmly believe that we must protect the rights of all eligible citizens to vote. Over the past few decades, minorities in this country have witnessed a pattern of efforts to intimidate and harass minority voters through so-called "Voter ID" requirements. I am sad to report that as we head into the 21st century, these efforts continue.

Never in the history of our nation, has the effect of one person, one vote, been more important. A great Spanish Philosopher, George Santayana once said "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Our history has taught us that denying the right to vote based on race, gender or class is a stain on the democratic principles that we all value. The Voting Rights Act was a reaction to the actions of our passed and a way to pave the road to a new future.

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) was adopted in 1965 and was extended in 1970, 1975, 1982, and 2007. This legislation is considered the most successful piece of civil rights legislation ever adopted by the United States Congress. Contrary to the prevailing rumor that the Act is due to expire, leaving minorities with no rights, the Act is actually due for reauthorization in the 2nd session of the 108th Congress—there is no doubt about whether it will continue to protect our rights in the future.

The VRA codifies and effectuates the 15th Amendment's permanent guarantee that, throughout the nation, no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color. Adopted at a time when African Americans were substantially disenfranchised in many Southern states, the Act employed measures to restore the right to vote to citizens of all U.S. states.

By 1965, proponents of disenfranchisement made violent attempts to thwart the efforts of

civil rights activists. The murder of voting-rights activists in Philadelphia and Mississippi gained national attention, along with numerous other acts of violence and terrorism.

Finally, the unprovoked attack on March 7, 1965, by state troopers on peaceful marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, en route to the state capitol in Montgomery, persuaded the President and Congress to overcome Southern legislators' resistance to effective voting rights legislation. President Johnson issued a call for a strong voting rights law and hearings began soon thereafter on the bill that would become the Voting Rights Act.

Congress adopted this far-reaching statute in response to a rash of instances of interference with attempts by African American citizens to exercise their right to vote—a rash that appears to be manifesting itself again in this nation. Perhaps a legislative measure is needed to respond in a way that the VRA did.

The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the VRA in 1966 in a landmark decision—*South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, 383 U.S. 301, 327–28:

Congress had found that case-by-case litigation was inadequate to combat widespread and persistent discrimination in voting, because of the inordinate amount of time and energy required to overcome the obstructionist tactics invariably encountered in these lawsuits. After enduring nearly a century of systematic resistance to the Fifteenth Amendment, Congress might well decide to shift the advantage of time and inertia from the perpetrators of the evil to its victims.

It seems that the “obstructionist tactics” that threatened the aggrieved parties in *Katzenbach* have returned. The advantages of “time and inertia” that were shifted from bigoted bureaucrats to minority victims are slowly shifting back against their favor when educators, government leaders, and agencies are allowed to contravene the policy and legal conclusions given by the highest court in the country.

Several factors influenced the initiation of this civil rights legislation. The first was a large shift in the number of African Americans away from the Republican Party. Second, many Democrats felt that it was a mistake of its Southern members to oppose civil rights legislation because they could lose more of the African American and liberal votes.

No right is more fundamental than the right to vote. It is protected by more constitutional amendments—the 1st, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th and 26th—than any other right we enjoy as Americans. Broad political participation ensures the preservation of all our other rights and freedoms. 3 State laws that impose new restrictions on voting, however, undermine our strong democracy by impeding access to the polls and reducing the number of Americans who vote and whose votes are counted.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

There have been several restrictive voting bills considered and approved by states in the past several years. The most commonly advanced initiatives are laws that require voters to present photo identification when voting in person. Additionally, states have proposed or passed laws to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote; to eliminate the right to register to vote and to submit a change of address within the same state on Election Day; to shorten the time allowed for early voting; to make it more difficult for third-party or-

ganizations to conduct voter registration; and even to eliminate a mandate on poll workers to direct voters who go to the wrong precinct.

These recent changes are on top of the disfranchisement laws in 48 states that deprive an estimated 5.3 million people with criminal convictions—disproportionately African Americans and Latinos—of their political voice.

Voter ID laws are becoming increasingly common across the country. Today, 31 states have laws requiring voters to present some form of identification to vote in federal, state and local elections, although some laws or initiatives passed in 2011 have not yet gone into effect. Some must also be pre-cleared under the Voting Rights Act prior to implementation. In 16 of those 31 States, voters must (or will soon be required to) present a photo ID—that in many states must be government-issued—in order to cast a ballot.

Voter ID laws deny the right to vote to thousands of registered voters who do not have, and, in many instances, cannot obtain the limited identification states accept for voting. Many of these Americans cannot afford to pay for the required documents needed to secure a government issued photo ID. As such, these laws impede access to the polls and are at odds with the fundamental right to vote.

In total, more than 21 million Americans of voting age lack documentation that would satisfy photo ID laws, and a disproportionate number of these Americans are low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, and elderly. As many as 25% of African Americans of voting age lack government-issued photo ID, compared to only 8% of their white counterparts. Eighteen percent of Americans over the age of 65 do not have government-issued photo ID.

Laws requiring photo identification to vote are a “solution” in search of a problem. There is no credible evidence that in-person impersonation voter fraud—the only type of fraud that photo IDs could prevent—is even a minor problem. Multiple studies have found that almost all cases of alleged in-person impersonation voter “fraud” are actually the result of a voter making an inadvertent mistake about their eligibility to vote, and that even these mistakes are extremely infrequent.

It is important, instead, to focus on both expanding the franchise and ending practices which actually threaten the integrity of the elections, such as improper purges of voters, voter harassment, and distribution of false information about when and where to vote. None of these issues, however, are addressed or can be resolved with a photo ID requirement.

Furthermore, requiring voters to pay for an ID, as well as the background documents necessary to obtain an ID in order to vote, is tantamount to a poll tax. Although some states issue IDs for free, the birth certificates, passports, or other documents required to secure a government-issued ID cost money, and many Americans simply cannot afford to pay for them. In addition, obtaining a government-issued photo ID is not an easy task for all members of the electorate. Low-income individuals who lack the funds to pay for documentation, people with disabilities with limited access to transportation, and elderly Americans who never had a birth certificate and cannot obtain alternate proof of their birth in the U.S., are among those who face significant or insurmountable obstacles to getting

the photo ID needed to exercise their right to vote. For example, because of Texas' recently passed voter ID law, an estimated 36,000 people in West Texas's District 19 are 137 miles from the nearest full service Department of Public Safety office, where those without IDs must travel to preserve their right to vote under the state's new law.

In addition, women who have changed their names due to marriage or divorce often experience difficulties with identity documentation, as did Andrea, who recently moved from Massachusetts to South Carolina and who, in the span of a month, spent more than 17 hours online and in person trying without success to get a South Carolina driver's license.

Voter ID laws send not-so-subtle messages about who is and is not encouraged to vote. As states approve laws requiring photo ID to vote, each formulates its own list of acceptable forms of documentation. Another common thread emerging from disparate state approaches is a bias against robust student electoral participation.

Henceforth, students at Wisconsin colleges and universities will not be able to vote using their student ID cards, unless those cards have issuance dates, expiration dates, and signatures.

Currently, only a handful of Wisconsin colleges and universities are issuing compliant IDs. Nor will South Carolina, Texas, or Tennessee accept student identification at the polls.

Policies that limit students' electoral participation are particularly suspect, appearing on the heels of unprecedented youth turnout in the 2008 election.

Four states with new voter identification mandates, including my home state of Texas, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama, are required under the Voting Rights Act to have these voting changes pre-cleared by either the Department of Justice (DOJ) or a panel of federal judges. Before they may be implemented, DOJ must certify that these laws do not have the purpose or effect of restricting voting by racial or language minority groups.

Thus far, South Carolina and Texas both have submitted applications to DOJ that have been formally opposed in written submissions. DOJ has requested further information from both states, and the applications are on hold. Alabama's ID requirements do not take effect until 2014, so the state has not yet applied to DOJ for preclearance. Mississippi's voter ID requirement was approved by voters on November 8, 2011, so a preclearance request has not yet been submitted.

In countries scattered across this earth, citizens are denied the right to speak their hearts and minds. In this country, only a few decades ago, the right to vote was limited by race, sex, or the financial ability to own land. When a vote is not cast, it is a referendum on all those who fought so hard and tirelessly for our rights. When a vote is cast, it is cast not only for you and the future but also for all those who never had the chance to pull a lever.

We are still working to make Martin Luther King's dream a reality, a reality in which our government's decisions are made out in the open not behind cigar filled closed doors.

The time to take back the country is at hand, and we are the ones with the power to do just that. To do so we must allow all citizens who are eligible to vote, with the right to excise this decision without tricks or tactics to dilute their right to vote.

Instances of voter intimidation are not long ago and far away. Just last year I sent a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to draw his attention to several disturbing instances of voter intimidation that had taken place in Houston. In a single week there were at least 15 reports of abuse of voter rights throughout the city of Houston.

As a Senior Member of the House Judiciary Committee, I called for an immediate investigation of these instances. Many of these incidents of voter intimidation were occurring in predominately minority neighborhoods and have been directed at African-Americans and Latinos. It is unconscionable to think that anyone would deliberately employ the use of such forceful and intimidating tactics to undermine the fundamental, Constitutional right to vote. However, such conduct has regrettably occurred in Houston, and I urge you to take appropriate action to ensure that it does not recur.

I am here today in the name of freedom, patriotism, and democracy. I am here to demand that the long hard fought right to vote continues to be protected.

A long, bitter, and bloody struggle was fought for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 so that all Americans could enjoy the right to vote, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Americans died in that fight so that others could achieve what they had been forcefully deprived of for centuries—the ability to walk freely and without fear into the polling place and cast a voting ballot.

Efforts to keep minorities from fully exercising that franchise, however, continue. Indeed, in the past thirty years, we have witnessed a pattern of efforts to intimidate and harass minority voters including efforts that were deemed “Ballot Security” programs that include the mailing of threatening notices to African-American voters, the carrying of video cameras to monitor polls, the systematic challenging of minority voters at the polls on unlawful grounds, and the hiring of guards and off-duty police officers to intimidate and frighten voters at the polls.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a particularly poor track record when it comes to documented acts of voter intimidation. In 1982, a Federal Court in New Jersey provided a consent order that forbids the Republican National Committee from undertaking any ballot security activities in a polling place or election district where race or ethnic composition is a factor in the decision to conduct such activities and where a purpose or significant effect is to deter qualified voters from voting. These reprehensible practices continue to plague our Nation’s minority voters.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT HISTORY

August 6, 2011, marked the 46th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.

Most Americans take the right to vote for granted. We assume that we can register and vote if we are over 18 and are citizens. Most of us learned in school that discrimination based on race, creed or national origin has been barred by the Constitution since the end of the Civil War.

Before the 1965 Voting Rights Act, however, the right to vote did not exist in practice for most African Americans. And, until 1975, most American citizens who were not proficient in English faced significant obstacles to voting, because they could not understand the ballot.

Even though the Indian Citizenship Act gave Native Americans the right to vote in 1924,

state law determined who could actually vote, which effectively excluded many Native Americans from political participation for decades.

Asian Americans and Asian immigrants also have suffered systematic exclusion from the political process and it has taken a series of reforms, including repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, and passage of amendments strengthening the Voting Rights Act three decades later, to fully extend the franchise to Asian Americans. It was with this history in mind that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was designed to make the right to vote a reality for all Americans.

And the Voting Rights Act has made giant strides toward that goal. Without exaggeration, it has been one of the most effective civil rights laws passed by Congress.

In 1964, there were only approximately 300 African-Americans in public office, including just three in Congress. Few, if any, black elected officials were elected anywhere in the South. Today there are more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 43 members of Congress, the largest number ever. The act has opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Latino public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including 263 at the state or federal level, 27 of whom serve in Congress. And Native Americans, Asians and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

We must not forget the importance of protecting this hard earned right.

VOTER ID

An election with integrity is one that is open to every eligible voter. Restrictive voter ID requirements degrade the integrity of our elections by systematically excluding large numbers of eligible Americans.

I do not argue with the notion that we must prevent individuals from voting who are not allowed to vote. Yet a hidden argument in this bill is that immigrants may “infiltrate” our voting system. Legal immigrants who have successfully navigated the citizenship maze are unlikely to draw the attention of the authorities by attempting to register incorrectly. Similarly, undocumented immigrants are even less likely to risk deportation just to influence an election.

If for no other reason than after a major disaster be it earthquakes, fires, floods or hurricanes, we must all understand how vulnerable our system is. Families fleeing the hurricanes and fires suffered loss of property that included lost documents. Compounding this was the devastation of the region, which virtually shut down civil services in the area. For example, New Orleans residents after Hurricane Katrina were scattered across 44 states. These uprooted citizens had difficulty registering and voting both with absentee ballots and at satellite voting stations. As a result, those elections took place fully 8 months after the disaster, and it required the efforts of nonprofits, such as the NAACP, to ensure that voters had the access they are constitutionally guaranteed.

We need to address the election fraud that we know occurring, such as voting machine integrity and poll volunteer training and competence. After every election that occurs in this country, we have solid documented evidence of voting inconsistencies and errors. In 2004, in New Mexico, malfunctioning machines mysteriously failed to properly register

a presidential vote on more than 20,000 ballots. 1 million ballots nationwide were flawed by faulty voting equipment—roughly one for every 100 cast.

Those who face the most significant barriers are not only the poor, minorities, and rural populations. 1.5 million college students, whose addresses change often, and the elderly, will also have difficulty providing documentation.

In fact, newly married individuals face significant barriers to completing a change in surname. For instance, it can take 6–8 weeks to receive the marriage certificate in the mail, another two weeks (and a full day waiting in line) to get the new Social Security card, and finally three–four weeks to get the new driver’s license. There is a significant possibility that this bill will also prohibit newlyweds from voting if they are married within three months of Election Day.

The right to vote is a critical and sacred constitutionally protected civil right. To challenge this is to erode our democracy, challenge justice, and mock our moral standing. I urge my colleagues to join me in dismissing this crippling legislation, and pursue effective solutions to the real problems of election fraud and error. We cannot let the rhetoric of an election year destroy a fundamental right upon which we have established liberty and freedom.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

WASHINGTON, DC,

July 25, 2011.

Hon. ERIC HOLDER,

U.S. Attorney General, United States Department of Justice, Robert F. Kennedy Building, 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER: We are concerned about the restrictive voter photo identification legislation pending or already signed into law in a number of states. Many of these bills only have one true purpose, the disenfranchisement of eligible voters—especially the elderly, young voters, students, minorities, and low-income voters. Approximately 11 percent of voting-age citizens in the country—or more than 20 million individuals—lack government-issued photo identification. We urge you to protect the voting rights of Americans by using the full power of the Department of Justice to review these voter identification bills and scrutinize their implementation.

The Voting Rights Act vests significant authority in the Department to ensure laws are not implemented in a discriminatory manner. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act requires preclearance by the Department when there is an attempt to change any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting in covered jurisdictions. In Section 5 jurisdictions, whenever photo identification legislation is considered, the Department should closely monitor the legislative process to track any unlawful intent evinced by the proceedings. In jurisdictions not covered by Section 5, the Department should exercise vigilance in overseeing whether these laws are implemented in a way that discriminates against protected classes in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Restrictive voter photo identification legislation has the potential to block millions of eligible American voters, and thus suppress the right to vote. We urge you to exercise your authority to examine these laws so that voting rights are not jeopardized. We also request that you brief us on the efforts the Department is undertaking to ensure

these new laws are implemented in accordance with the Voting Rights Act.

Sincerely,

Marcia L. Fudge; Nancy Pelosi; Steny H. Hoyer; James E. Clyburn; John B. Larson; George Miller; Tim Ryan; Janice D. Schakowsky; Keith Ellison; Grace F. Napolitano; Emanuel Cleaver; André Carson; Raúl M. Grijalva; Maxine Waters; Laura Richardson; Lucille Roybal-Allard; Silvestre Reyes; Sheila Jackson Lee; Yvette D. Clarke; Bob Filner.

Barbara Lee; Donna M. Christensen; José E. Serrano; Judy Chu; Alcee L. Hastings; Charles B. Rangel; Karen Bass; Frederica S. Wilson; Melvin L. Watt; Eleanor Holmes Norton; Bennie G. Thompson; G. K. Butterfield; William Lacy Clay; Danny K. Davis; John Lewis; Gwen Moore; Tammy Baldwin; Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.; Robert C. "Bobby" Scott; Donald M. Payne.

Michael M. Honda; Betty McCollum; Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.; Robert A. Brady; Dennis J. Kucinich; Edolphus Towns; Anna G. Eshoo; Steve Cohen; Corrine Brown; Luis V. Guterrez; Elijah E. Cummings; Rubén Hinojosa; Joe Baca; Chellie Pingree; Betty Sutton; Terri A. Sewell; Charles A. Gonzalez; Fortney Pete Stark; Peter Welch; Brad Miller.

Ben Ray Lujan; Loretta Sanchez; Carolyn B. Maloney; Donna F. Edwards; Dale E. Kildee; Henry A. Waxman; Doris O. Matsui; James P. McGovern; Eni F.H. Faleomavaega; Eliot L. Engel; Earl Blumenauer; Hansen Clarke; Gary L. Ackerman; John Garamendi; Russ Carnahan; Jerry McNerney; Rush D. Holt; Bill Pascrell, Jr.; Robert E. Andrews; Peter A. DeFazio.

Zoe Lofgren; Paul Tonko; Howard L. Berman; Lynn C. Woolsey; Michael H. Michaud; Lois Capps; Xavier Becerra; Rosa L. DeLauro; Steve Israel; Louise McIntosh Slaughter; Chris Van Hollen; Al Green; Cedric L. Richmond; Albio Sires; Sam Farr; Jim McDermott; Jim Cooper; Gregory W. Meeks; Nydia Velázquez; Marcy Kaptur.

Eddie Bernice-Johnson; Theodore E. Deutch; Lloyd Doggett; Linda T. Sánchez; John P. Sarbanes; John W. Olver; Jerrold Nadler; John C. Carney; John D. Dingell; John F. Tierney; James A. Himes; Chaka Fattah; David E. Price; Ed Pastor; Chris Murphy.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank you for your support, and I know that I have the support of the Congressional Black Caucus. It just raises the issue that we have been coming to the floor for the entire year to speak on before this evening, and that's jobs and job creation.

Mine, like other communities across the country, will definitely need to enact legislation, like the American Jobs Act and some of the countless pieces of legislation that the Congressional Black Caucus has introduced in this Congress to create jobs for the people, for people in this country.

I just wanted to add that in addition to the impact on the U.S. Virgin Islands and St. Croix in particular, this closing will have a major impact, especially on the east coast, as Hovensa has been a major supplier of gasoline to the east coast. So, again, I ask for your prayers and your support.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong opposition to voter suppression efforts in Texas and in several other states throughout the country.

In the United States, we use voting as a means for the people to select their elected representatives at all levels of government. This is a basic tenet of American democracy that some have sought to manipulate and curtail.

Through a series of regressive voting laws, a number of state legislatures have already taken extraordinary measures to exclude the elderly, our youth, minorities, and the poor from access to the polls and casting their ballots.

Whether in the form of voter ID mandates, obstructions to voter registration, or even outright intimidation, these measures to keep eligible voters from exercising their right to vote are contrary to our founding principles as a Nation.

In Texas, strict voter ID laws were passed in the State Legislature last year. This law requires each voter to present a valid government-issued ID, regardless of whether they possess a voter registration card and are listed among the voting rolls. These efforts are specifically tailored to exclude specific voting groups.

The only mechanism keeping these discriminatory policies from becoming effective in Texas is preclearance, required under the Voting Rights Act in states that have a history of racial discrimination.

We need only to look to history to know that these kinds of devious tactics have been used before. In essence, these laws mimic the literacy tests and poll taxes that defined the days of Jim Crow. Except today, these laws target not only minorities but also seniors, students, the disabled, and the poor.

Yet here we find ourselves again battling the same problem with a different disguise. I refuse to accept that these laws seek to address existing weaknesses in our electoral system. In fact, these laws do nothing to address the kinds of fraud that were exposed during previous elections, such as the purging of entire voter rolls or intentionally long wait times during early voting.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely critical that we work toward strengthening the integrity of our elections and avoid tactics meant to sway their outcome in favor of a select few. It is undemocratic and I will continue to oppose any efforts to suppress our electorate.

RIGHT TO LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARDNER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the right-to-life movement is the greatest human rights movement on Earth, a remarkable decades-long struggle embraced by millions of selfless women and men of all ages, races, colors and creed and made up in recent years, I'm happy to say, disproportionately of young people.

We defend and seek to protect all the weak and vulnerable persons from the

violence of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. We believe in the politics and policies of inclusion, regardless of race, age, sex, disability or condition of dependence.

Yesterday, January 22, marked the 39th year since the infamous holdings of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, the pair of Supreme Court decisions that nullified fundamental pro-life protections throughout the United States. The catastrophic loss of children's lives since Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton has been absolutely numbing. Over 54 million children have been killed by dismemberment, chemical poisoning, lethal pills, suction and starvation.

Let's not forget that RU-486 is a chemical compound. It's two chemicals, and one of the effects of one of those chemicals is to literally starve the baby in the womb to death. The second chemical brings on delivery of a dead baby. Women have been harmed by abortion as well. Over 100 studies showed significant psychological harm, major depression and elevated suicide risk in women who abort.

The Times of London wrote, senior psychiatrists say that new evidence has uncovered a clear link between abortion and mental illness in women with no previous history of psychological problems. They found that women who had abortions had twice the level of psychological problems and three times the level of depression as women who give birth or who have never been pregnant.

Younger women are also harmed by abortion psychologically. A comprehensive New Zealand study found that almost 80 percent of 15- to 18-year-olds who had abortions displayed symptoms of major depression as compared to 31 percent of their peers.

Abortion also has a deleterious effect on subsequent children born to women who have aborted. At least 113 studies showed significant association between abortion and subsequent premature births. One study by Shah and Zoe showed a 36 percent increased risk for preterm birth after one abortion and a staggering 93 percent increased risk after two.

What does this mean for subsequent children born to women who have had abortions? Preterm birth is the leading cause of infant mortality in the industrialized world after congenital abnormalities or anomalies. Preterm infants have a greater risk of suffering from common lung disease, sensory deficit, cerebral palsy and cognitive impairment and behavioral problems.

Low birth weight, which is also one of the consequences, is associated with neo-natal mortality and motility.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, at the March for Life today, there were large, large numbers of people, tens of thousands of people. As cochair of the Pro-Life Caucus, I was proud to stay with so many of our lawmakers here, many of whom are on the floor tonight, and also with our leadership, Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, Majority Leader CANTOR, KEVIN