

of our most fundamental rights, and that is the right to vote.

I was born and raised in Texas and I vividly remember the days of Jim Crow, segregation, and the poll tax. The Supreme Court decision could turn the clock back to these very, very tragic days in our American history.

It is truly tragic how the majority of the Court has simply refused to acknowledge these real threats to our voting rights and turned its back on the law that people fought and died for.

Now is the time for urgent, bipartisan congressional action. We must defend the heart and soul of this democracy.

As our drum major for justice, Dr. Martin Luther King, once said, "Voting is the foundation stone for political action."

I am reminded of this every year when I march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, with our great warrior, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who really sacrificed so much for justice and for freedom.

Truly, our votes are the bedrock of our democracy.

BORDER SECURITY

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, today in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on border security, we heard from border officials that the border is not secure, or more specifically we heard no response when we asked: Is the border secure or not? And they would not answer "yes" and they would not answer "no."

The American people have been asking for a secure border before we engage in comprehensive immigration reform for years. The fact that this administration and, quite frankly, previous administrations have not secured the border, makes it premature to address the Senate bill here in the House.

Comprehensive immigration reform must be preceded by a secure border.

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VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to right a shameful wrong committed by the Supreme Court and update the Voting Rights Act to restore an essential protection against voter discrimination.

By gutting the Voting Rights Act, the Court greatly dishonored those who fought and died to protect the rights of the disenfranchised, who continue to face pervasive voting discrimination. Recent efforts in parts of the country to impose voter ID laws, to limit access to early voting and to gerrymander districts to hinder the minority vote serve

as irrefutable proof that voter discrimination remains a real threat to our democracy. The Voting Rights Act prevented discrimination in these cases, something it can't do as it exists now.

We must act immediately to fix the gaping hole in this vital protection of the right to vote. Each day that passes without a strong Voting Rights Act is another day justice is deferred. We have a moral imperative to act swiftly in a bipartisan manner to get this done. I urge my colleagues to act now.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Supreme Court made a decision that threatens the right to vote for millions of Americans.

With this misguided decision, leaders in States with a history of discrimination can proceed unimpeded with plans to obstruct the civil rights of American citizens. Whether through gerrymandering or voter ID laws, like the one in my home State of Indiana, efforts are being made to restrict the voting rights of minorities, low-income families and seniors.

I stand today to ask my colleagues in Congress to recognize the importance of preserving the right to vote for all Americans, regardless of background. As elected Representatives, we understand better than anyone that an open, equitable process is the very foundation and definition of our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court called on Congress to act for the good of our country and our constituents. We must act boldly and quickly.

SAVE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

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

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask—I beg—of all of our colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to come together and save the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I wish somehow, in some way, that members of the United States Supreme Court could come and walk in my shoes. I have seen hundreds and thousands of people stand in a movable line, asked to count the numbers of bubbles in a bar of soap, the number of jellybeans in a jar. I've seen too many of my sisters and brothers denied the right to register, denied the right to vote, simply because of the color of their skin.

We've come too far. We've made too much progress, Mr. Speaker, and we cannot go back—for the vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful, nonviolent tool we have in a democratic society, and no one, but no one—African American, Latino,

White, Asian American, Native American—should be denied the right to participate in the democratic process. So let's come together and do what we should do, and what another generation of elected officials did.

STUDENT LOAN RATES

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

Mr. BARBER. I am deeply discouraged that as we face the impending doubling of interest rates for student loans that House leadership will send us home tomorrow without a solution.

More than 7 million students, former students and their families in the United States, including more than 450,000 in my home State of Arizona, rely on these loans to help pay for college. Federal student loans are a critical tool for ensuring that educational opportunities remain open to as many Americans as possible.

Higher education is a critical economic engine for my State and for the Nation. Workers age 25 and older, with a bachelor's degree, we know, earn 63 percent more than those with a high school diploma. These differences will only increase as the world economy becomes more competitive and technologically advanced.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stay here, not go home tomorrow, but stay here and work together to prevent student loan interest rates from doubling in 4 days. D-day is July 1, and we must act now to support the aspiring young Americans to get their college educations.

BALDWIN STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL, A SCHOOL TO WATCH

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

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity today to do a little bragging about Baldwin Street Middle School, which came to visit me today from Hudsonville, Michigan. They came to brag about their excellence and success as being designated a School to Watch.

That's a national program that goes in and identifies middle schools around the country that are very focused on innovation and success but also on improvement. Every single day, they are going into that building as administrators and as teachers to improve, not only the students, but themselves. And I think that is what we need more of here in education in the United States. They were also very proud to know that I had a staff member, Nate Bult, who is an alumni of that middle school. They were very, very proud to see him and the success that he has been able to have.

So, again, I just want to congratulate Baldwin Street Middle School in Hudsonville, Michigan, for their dedication to the students of the Second

District and for their willingness to put the students and innovation above any of themselves as they serve our community.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. HORSFORD. Let me just say it's good to see the freshman class president from the other side at the Speaker's podium this evening.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Supreme Court struck down critical parts of the Voting Rights Act, and I, like my colleagues, am deeply disappointed in this decision.

Justice Scalia said the Voting Rights Act is a "racial entitlement."

Voting is not a racial entitlement. It is a right for every eligible voting age citizen. It is an American entitlement.

Voter suppression tactics have become more sophisticated, but they have not disappeared. The Voting Rights Act blocked more than 1,000 voting law changes between 1982 and 2006, and last year alone, the Voting Rights Act stopped a voter ID law in Texas and a Florida law that eliminated early voting days.

Now it has fallen to Congress to safeguard our most sacred right, and I will work with anyone from either party who understands the need to protect this fundamental right. I urge this body to work together to fix the Voting Rights Act.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Ms. SEWELL of Alabama asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to join with my colleagues in expressing my deep disappointment in the Supreme Court's decision on the Voting Rights Act. I stand not just as a Member of Congress but as a Member of Congress who represents Selma, Alabama. I stand not only as a Member who represents Selma, Alabama, but also as a native of Selma.

I can tell you that, as I think about the Edmund Pettus Bridge each and every time I go home, I think about JOHN LEWIS and of so many foot soldiers who dedicated their lives for the right to vote. I know that I would not be able to stand in this well had it not been for their fight.

So I implore my colleagues: we as elected officials cannot afford to not protect the right to vote. It is sacred, our right to vote. I think that the only way that we, with dignity, can continue as elected officials is if we protect each and every person's right to vote in America. So I implore us to work together to figure out a coverage formula that will work. I also urge all of us to remember what it's like to see JOHN LEWIS in this well. JOHN LEWIS is the face of voting rights in America. I

ask us to work together to figure out a formula to protect the right to vote.

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INVESTIGATING POSSIBLE UNETHICAL ACTIVITIES

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

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, we've had reports that HHS Secretary Sebelius has been soliciting funds from private companies to go and promote the President's health care law. In fact, there's a committee in Congress that's investigating these reports and how it would either potentially break the law or clearly violate ethics laws. In addition to that, now we're seeing reports that the Obama administration is pressuring the NFL and the NBA to go and promote their health care law.

It is unethical for the Obama administration to pressure organizations that they regulate to try to promote their policies. So if Secretary Sebelius or any other Federal administrator is using their power in the regulatory structure to go and pressure organizations to promote their policies, they need to stop it right now, Mr. Speaker; and we need to continue in the House our oversight investigations into any kind of unethical activities like those that are being reported.

STUDENT LOAN RATES

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Education is the key to prosperity in this country. Families know that. That's why they save up for college for their students, but the cost of college has become so expensive that they've had to borrow money. The interest rates now are absolutely ridiculous, but they're about to get even worse on July 1 because Congress has not acted.

Families across our country and in my State of New Hampshire are depending on Congress to fix this problem. We cannot allow these rates to double. These families cannot afford that. I am calling on Congress to stay here until we settle this, to think about those families across this country, put off that vacation, stay right here and work it out.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, my friends across the aisle obviously are concerned about section 4 of the Voting Rights Act being struck down.

We debated the extension of the Voting Rights Act in the Judiciary Committee, and I have great respect for then-Chairman JOHN CONYERS. And as I mentioned to him privately, as well,

there's no way it's going to avoid being violative of equal protection when you have, as was determined in 2009, five of the six original States that now have less racial disparity than the rest of the country and the worst racial disparity is in Massachusetts. You can't just cram a punishment down on States just because you have a majority when great work has been done by the Voting Rights Act. It has done a good thing, and it was time for a new formula so we could capture the States that showed such racial disparity.

I look forward to working with my friends across the aisle to subjecting Massachusetts and any other violators—I know there aren't any others that bad—to section 5, and I'm sure we can get that done.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, my first babysitter was the Reverend Noah Albert Cleaver, my great-grandfather. He took care of me and my oldest sister every day after preschool. He lived to be 103 years old. I was in college when he died.

My grandpa, born in Cherokee County, Texas, who died in Ellis County, Texas, never voted, not one time in 103 years because they had to pay \$3.50 in a poll tax.

When the Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday saying that because of progress we don't need the voting rights any more, it's like having a cruise ship require everyone wear some kind of life vest. The ship goes down, everybody is saved, and they say, Well, because everybody was saved, we don't need life vests any more. It was the life vests that saved them. It was the Voting Rights Act that caused the voter participation to rise.

I will not insult the death and life of my great-grandpa by not being as active as I can to reinstitute section 4 of the Voting Rights Act.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Ms. BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for coming to the floor to discuss what I think is one of the most activist Court decisions probably in my lifetime.

When I was elected to Congress in 1992, it was the first time an African American won an election in Florida in 129 years in this body. And I can't stand in this body and not think about what happened in the 2000 election when we had a coup d'etat in this country, when 27,000 voters from my districts, Districts 7, 8, 9 and 10, their ballots were not counted and were thrown out because of poor equipment.

Let's don't talk about what happened 4 years later when Jeb Bush paid \$4