

information? Often, the answer is the 24-hour news cycle, often filled by talking heads and sensationalism; or, to social media and message boards, where anyone can post anything—credible or completely misinformed.

The American public is no longer being informed by the likes of Walter Cronkite and Edward Murrow, and it is making our public debate increasingly partisan, polarized, and misinformed.

What few realize or like to admit is that there is a way Congress can help elevate the debate and educate our constituents with neutral, unbiased, nonpartisan information from the Congressional Research Service, or CRS.

For over 100 years, CRS has served as Congress' publicly funded think tank. Because they serve policymakers on both sides of the aisle, CRS researchers produce exemplary work that is accurate, nonpartisan, and easy to understand.

Despite the fact that CRS receives over \$100 million from taxpayers each year, its reports are not made available to the public. Instead, constituents must request individual reports through a congressional office. This has led to several undesirable consequences.

Well-connected lobbyists have the easiest access to these reports, unlike the average American. Second, while nonprofits make some reports available online, there is no guarantee that they will remain available and up-to-date. And most outrageously, a small industry has sprung up reselling these reports for exorbitant fees. In other words, businesses are making a profit by selling publicly funded work, work that ultimately belongs to the people.

Keeping these reports in the hands of Congress and beltway insiders is selfish and indefensible. I understand that allowing the public to access these reports will not answer all the questions constituents have about the work that happens on Capitol Hill, but it underscores the broader need for increased transparency in Congress and government.

Public trust in government has reached historic lows, causing too many Americans to simply give up on Washington and the mission of government. The best way to rebuild the public's trust and promote a more efficient and effective government is by furthering government accountability through increased transparency.

It is time to recognize that educators, students, media, and everyday citizens deserve access to CRS reports and that this access gives our constituents vital information about the issues, policies, and budgets we are debating here in Congress.

That is why Congressman LANCE and I introduced H. Res. 34, which directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to maintain a centralized public database for nonconfidential CRS reports. This resolution gives the public tools to cut through the misinformation they face, gives them access to

something they are already paying for, and empowers the American people to hold Congress accountable for the decisions we make.

The steps toward a more open and transparent government may seem modest to some, but, in reality, they have a huge impact on how government serves the people. The mission of government matters, and if we are truly here to serve the people, then we owe it to them to operate in an open and transparent manner.

Let's give the public the information we are basing our decisions on. I urge my colleagues to stand up for transparency and accountability by supporting H. Res. 34. Information is power, and that is exactly what the American people deserve.

#### NATURAL GAS EXPANSION IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the efforts of the Susquehanna Economic Development Association's Council of Governments, otherwise known as SEDA-COG, in working to expand the availability of natural gas in areas across central Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, natural gas is not only produced right here in the United States of America, but it is also economical and versatile, with uses that range from home heating to cooking and drying clothes.

While Pennsylvania sits on one of the largest natural gas reserves in the Nation, many areas of the State are unserved or underserved by natural gas providers. Converting to natural gas can lead to big savings for consumers who currently rely on other home heating fuels such as propane and oil.

To help address this issue, SEDA-COG's \$160,000 pilot project will provide natural gas to these areas in order to attract manufacturers and to give homeowners the option to connect. To do that, this organization has joined with gas suppliers such as UGI Utilities and Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, starting with at least three projects in central Pennsylvania that will expand natural gas access to hundreds of potential users.

In addition, the project will focus on the sustainability of delivering natural gas through "virtual pipelines," where compressed gas would be delivered by a truck to be used by large commercial businesses located nearby.

If successful, SEDA-COG officials say that they could expand this model to fuel users connected by a small pipeline network, including residential areas such as housing developments.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the innovative spirit of SEDA-COG and its partners, and I look forward to learning more about how these projects could benefit other areas of Pennsylvania.

#### 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF DUBOIS BUSINESS COLLEGE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 130th anniversary of the DuBois Business College, which has several campuses located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District.

The college was founded in 1885 by a local businessman who recognized a need for skilled businessowners, operators, and employees. The school's original location was once known as the largest building in America devoted exclusively to commercial education.

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In the many years since, DuBois Business College has expanded not just to a new location in DuBois, but also to include branch campus locations in Oil City, Philipsburg, and Huntingdon.

Today the college has a student body of more than 400 and offers a variety of associate's degree and diploma programs, all of which can be completed in less than 2 years. This provides a quick transition for students into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome administrators and students from DuBois Business College to Capitol Hill today. I look forward to congratulating them in person, and I wish them well in their continued success.

#### RESTORATION TUESDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today is Restoration Tuesday. I rise today to support voting rights for all Americans.

I was proud to stand alongside Members who support the restoration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 recently and to launch the #restoretthevote legislative strategy. This national effort will help mobilize support for H.R. 2867, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, a bill that I sponsored with Representatives JUDY CHU and LINDA SÁNCHEZ to restore critical Federal oversight to jurisdictions who have a recent history of voter suppression.

Since elections are held on Tuesdays, every Tuesday that Congress is in session, like today, we will declare it to be Restoration Tuesday. So today I am speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives on the need to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Our call for restoring the VRA is urgent, Mr. Speaker. As our colleague JOHN LEWIS so eloquently says, there is no other work more important in this or any Congress than protecting the full access of all Americans to the democratic process.

If we do not act, the 2016 election will be the first Presidential election in 50 years without the protections offered to millions of voters by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We must act now.

I therefore urge all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, my Republican and my Democratic colleagues, to

join me on Tuesdays and speak in support of the Voting Rights Act and to sign onto the Voting Rights Restoration and Advancement Act of 2015, which restores key components of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Ultimately, this bill, H.R. 2657, will restore key components of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The bill will provide more protection to more people in more States. It is about broadening, expanding, advancing the Voting Rights Act.

Nothing is more American than voting. So every Tuesday Congress is in session we will be wearing the #restoretthevote pin. The red, white, and blue pin is a symbol of our unwavering commitment to restoring the voices of the excluded, ending discriminatory practices, and providing transparency in the voting process.

Fifty years ago, in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. His voice and his words still resonate today. The vote, he said, is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was pivotal in preventing voter discrimination and preventing it from occurring across the United States. The act gave millions of African Americans a voice, a voice that has been heard throughout our Nation for nearly 50 years.

Now the Voting Rights Advancement Act will expand that not just to African American voters, but to all voters. That is exactly what we should be about. We should be about expanding voting rights opportunities so that all Americans are protected.

As a daughter of Selma, Alabama, I am painfully aware that the injustices suffered on the Edmund Pettus Bridge 50 years ago have not been fully vindicated. As States across the country are passing laws to restrict access to the ballot box, we are ever mindful that old battles have indeed become new again.

The recent decision by the State of Alabama, for example, to close 31 DMV offices in majority Black counties in spite of Alabama's photo ID law is just one example of a modern-day barrier to voting.

The Supreme Court issued Congress a challenge in the Shelby decision. It didn't say that pre-clearance was unconstitutional. Rather, it said: Congress, come up with a modern-day formula to address modern-day barriers to voting.

Well, this example in Alabama of 31 DMV offices closing when indeed the State requires a photo ID and a driver's license is the most popular form of ID is one example.

These counties that were discriminated against by this recent law in Alabama were the very counties where foot soldiers and activists like Jimmie Lee Jackson and Jonathan Daniels died for the opportunity and the right for others to vote. If Federal pre-clearance provisions were still in effect, these DMV closings would not have occurred.

To restrict the ability of any American to vote is an assault on all Americans' equal participation in our electoral process. No one benefits when American voices are silenced at the polls.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud certain States like the States of California and Oregon, two States that are now automatically registering citizens who request a driver's license to actually vote.

So, Mr. Speaker, on this Restoration Tuesday, I am asking all of my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 2867, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, and I am asking all Americans to join us in our efforts for #restoretthevote and #restorationtuesday.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Neiman, one of his secretaries.

#### HANFORD LAND TRANSFER

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the opening of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, a significant part of which is in my Congressional District in the State of Washington.

Decades of successful cleanup efforts at the Hanford nuclear site have come to fruition with the dedication of the historic B Reactor as a part of this national park. The B Reactor was the world's first full-scale plutonium production reactor, helping our country end World War II and the cold war.

The new park will highlight the sacrifices and the contributions of thousands of workers who built the facility and the scientists whose groundbreaking research played a critical role in the Manhattan Project.

More than 50,000 visitors have toured the site since 2009, and the park will attract thousands more to learn about our region's history. The park will provide future generations with a unique educational experience.

I applaud the efforts of the community who has worked for years to make this national park a reality. I will continue to support the opening of additional sites for public access in order to preserve and tell the story of Hanford.

#### NOHEMI GONZALEZ AND THE ATTACKS ON PARIS

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, the people of France and the people of the United States have shared a common

bond of liberty and equality for over 200 years. In the face of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, that bond brings us now even closer in unity and in solidarity.

We stand with the French people as they mourn. We stand with the friends and families of those who were killed, like Nohemi Gonzalez, a young California State University, Long Beach, student studying abroad in Paris.

We also stand with our Cal State, Long Beach, family in their mourning. Nohemi's death is a very personal loss for each and every one of us. It tears at the very bonds of fraternity that embrace every member of our Cal State, Long Beach, family and the Long Beach community.

Nohemi was a daughter, a friend, and a mentor. Just 23 years of age, she was a vibrant student and what those who knew her have called "a shining star."

Nohemi committed herself to learning. She traveled across the globe to express and to explore her talents, her creativity, and the world. Now all that seems broken.

Yes, we grieve for Nohemi. But we also grieve for all the victims in Paris. We grieve for their families, their friends, and all their loved ones. We grieve for each and every one of them.

Today we are all part of the human family. As a family, we mourn Nohemi Gonzalez, our shining star. But in our mourning, let us remember something very, very important.

This was not an attack on Paris, though Paris was the target. This was not an attack on the French people, though the French people were the target. This was an attack on what unites us, our shared humanity and our shared values of liberty.

In that humanity, in those values, we will find the strength to stand strong in the face of senseless violence because, in the end, humanity that unites us is what frightens those who would do us harm.

#### ISLAMIC EXTREMISM ATTACK

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, America and her allies are under attack by Islamic extremism. The despicable act of terrorism the world witnessed over the weekend in Paris, France, serves as a stark reminder that the threat posed by ISIS knows no borders.

French officials have indicated that at least one of the Paris attackers linked to ISIS was admitted into Europe as a refugee from Syria. Nevertheless, the administration has made it clear that, in spite of this, it will continue to seek to bring up to 10,000 Syrian refugees to America in the coming year.

The President's refugee proposal places the interests of other nations ahead of the safety and security of the American people. Because we are unable to verify whether the next