

Agriculture, J. Robert Miller. Robert passed away last night at the age of 97.

J. Robert Miller was a legend in agriculture, agriculture education, and Kentucky politics. He served as Kentucky's Commissioner of Agriculture from 1957 to 1971 during the Louie Nunn administration. Before that, J. Robert was an agriculture teacher at Tompkinsville High School and always an active, lifelong farmer.

Growing up in 4-H and FFA, my earliest memories include Robert Miller. He was a mainstay at Monroe County area livestock shows and FFA banquets, always helping out and offering advice to present and future farmers.

J. Robert Miller was a great man who had a positive influence on countless Kentuckians.

STOP THE BLOCKADE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I always applaud when the United States steps in and takes a leadership role to prevent war. I have traveled to the Mideast for many years as a Member of the United States Congress representing my constituents.

I want to express my appreciation to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for the energy that he is putting into engaging Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Jordan, Egypt, and Qatar to be able to stop the blockade and the conflict that may continue to grow against Qatar.

This is a region that many of these countries have been allies of the United States, the Southern Command is in Qatar, and, frankly, I think they need to be united against those terrorists that plague them all.

I would also say that the UAE, as has been reported in the Nation's newspapers, hacked into the emails of Qatar and put words in the mouths of their government officials that were untrue. This is not the way to proceed with peace and diplomacy.

So I believe we should energetically and aggressively engage these countries to stop this blockade and begin to repair the collaborative efforts to ensure that we fight the war on terror together and not against.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Tillerson. I look forward to working with him as a Member of the United States Congress to bring peace to that region.

RECOGNIZING PENN STATE CREAMERY IN HONOR OF NATIONAL ICE CREAM DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Americans observed National Ice Cream Day, which is celebrated annually on the third Sunday in July.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan made the designation and also named July National Ice Cream Month.

Our very own Penn State University is a world leader in dairy production and food science. Over the last 150 years, its Berkey Creamery has been an important Penn State landmark.

Penn State has a herd of more than 200 Holsteins that are milked twice daily, which is the start of the university's delicious ice cream. The methods developed by Penn State's food and dairy scientists have made the creamery a world authority on ice cream and dairy manufacturing.

Penn State's legendary short course, which takes participants from "Cow to Cone," has attracted some of the biggest names in ice cream, from Baskin-Robbins to Ben & Jerry's, from Hershey's to Haagen-Dazs.

For 6 days a year, industry professionals head to Happy Valley for the best-known program dealing with science and the technology of ice cream.

Congratulations to Penn State for being the industry leader, and happy National Ice Cream Month.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor and the privilege of being a United States Congressman, and with that comes tremendous responsibility. We have a country of over 320 million people—men, women, and children. And right now, we may be days away or even a couple of weeks away from watching the United States Senate possibly change healthcare for America like we have never seen before.

I hope and pray that my colleagues in both Houses and the President of the United States try their best to make sure that we enhance healthcare access rather than divert more than 20 million people away from being able to see a doctor.

Just last week I was visited by some young folks and I was given this red band called "Will Power" for a little boy named Will, who has gone through many operations. If these bills see the light of day and the President's desk and gets into law, people like Will just might not be around very much longer.

Mr. Speaker, let's hope and pray that we do the right thing.

CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES OF THE 2ND MARINE RAIDER BATTALION

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my condolences to the families of the 15 marines and one

Navy corpsman who tragically lost their lives last week.

These servicemembers were among the most elite in our armed services, with six marines and the sailor from the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion located at Camp Lejeune. The other nine were based out of Stewart Air National Guard Base located in Newburgh, New York.

Many of them had been deployed and served in conflicts in the Middle East. These American heroes valiantly served and placed the needs of our Nation first.

As the parent of a marine now deployed in the Middle East, it is with a heavy heart that I offer my condolences to the friends and families of these exceptional Americans. The greatest worry of family and friends is the tragic loss of a loved one who is serving; thus, it is important to honor and remember these brave men and the sacrifices they made to preserve our way of life.

We thank them and remember them for their service and sacrifice. Semper fi.

CELEBRATING VERA POWELL'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of Ms. Vera Powell, who lives in Pooler, Georgia.

Ms. Powell was born on July 16, 1927, in Tattnall County, Georgia, about 60 miles due west of Savannah. After graduating from Tattnall County High School, Ms. Powell dedicated her life to her family and raising her three children: Bruce, Linda, and Crystal.

In 1994, Ms. Powell moved from Tattnall County to Pooler, Georgia, and became a member of the First Baptist Church of Pooler. Her love of God and fellowship with others turned into a meaningful role with the church's weekly Sunday school class.

Now she has been an active weekly participant, greatly contributing to the fellowship and scholarship with the class for the past 23 years, and is a staple of the church.

The members of the congregation look forward to seeing Ms. Powell as she greets them at the church doors every Sunday morning.

Ms. Powell's family and friends celebrated her 90th birthday with a reception on July 16, 2017. Please join me in wishing this remarkable woman a very happy birthday.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here with you this evening and to talk about a very important topic.

Before I get into the topic of this hour, it is with great honor that I rise today to coanchor this CBC Special Order hour with my dear friend, Delegate STACEY PLASKETT from the Virgin Islands, and also acknowledge our CBC chair, the Honorable CEDRIC RICHMOND from the great State of Louisiana.

For the next 60 minutes, we have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congress, the constituents that we represent, and all Americans on this very important issue of voter suppression.

Before I go into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, we do have some colleagues here that would like to also speak about this very timely and important topic.

There have been many developments that have occurred over the last week dealing with commissions that are being formed out of the White House to help aid in voter suppression and other things that have been very troubling.

So I am going to ask for the first speaker to rise, and that would be my colleague, also from the great State of Texas, from Harris County and the city of Houston, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE, who has been very thoughtful and been a great voice on expanding the rights to vote of all Americans. I thank Representative JACKSON LEE for taking the time during this hour to come out and talk about this very important topic.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), the coleader of this hour, along with Delegate PLASKETT, for not only their astute leadership of the hour, but certainly of their astute leadership of the issue. I am delighted to join my colleagues. I thank the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mr. CEDRIC RICHMOND, for continuing to make sure that the conscience of the Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus, is heard on these crucial issues.

Mr. VEASEY, I am going to focus my issues—because this is not a Republican or Democratic issue. It is an American issue. I do want to personally thank you for your leadership as the named plaintiff of the Texas voter ID litigation, which has been—how should I say? I wanted to say Earth-

shattering—but it has been groundbreaking in its recognition of the diminishing of the rights of people to vote by a draconian voter ID law. We know that it has been somewhat modified, but your astuteness recognizes that, even in its modification, in the coming elections, we should be very wary of the effort that the State will utilize the voter ID law for voter suppression.

So today I want to rise in the backdrop of the Shelby case, which many of us are well aware of. The Shelby case, which occurred in Alabama, was the unfortunate case that turned back the clock on the 1965 Voting Rights Act that had been working for decades with absolutely no problem; but, unfortunately, this conservative-leaning Supreme Court made decisions not on what is good for America, not even on what is good in terms of the law, but decided to eliminate section 5.

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I am reminded of the very astute words of Justice Ginsburg, very astute words, when she was appalled that the Supreme Court yielded to what I would consider misinterpretation, that there is no problem with discrimination and there is no problem with racism, and Justice Ginsburg very astutely said: Well, we have been very fortunate that the polio vaccination has all but extinguished polio in the United States.

That is great news. But because we have extinguished polio, does that mean we need to get rid of the polio vaccination? And any commonsense thinker, any American, any hard-working American, would absolutely, because they love their children and their families, would have a resounding “no.”

So why would you get rid of section 5 when there is documentation, unfortunately and sadly, of discrimination and of racism? Racism is a question of being discriminated against because of race. It does not say Black, it does not say any particular type of race, but it does mention race. That means that section 5 was a protector for all Americans and giving them the added protection of one vote, one person.

So, unfortunately, on June 28, 2017—and, by the way, Mr. Speaker, the pending meeting of this established Commission, the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, PACEI, is going to be meeting July 19, this week. This is a dangerous phenomenon.

The chair and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach wrote to the Nation's secretaries of state requesting extensive personal information on American voters—personal information, when we have stood in this well fighting against the PATRIOT Act when it was not written well after 9/11 because its premise was to spy on the American people and to ignore the Fourth Amendment, which is to protect Americans against unreasonable search and seizure.

This is unreasonable search and seizure. Let me list for you what this Commission is asking for. Some of this is public knowledge, but listen to this list: the full first and last names of all registrants; middle names or initials, if available; addresses, dates of birth, political party, if recorded in your State; last four digits of Social Security, if available; voter history—voter history—what elections you voted in from 2006 onward; active and inactive status.

I would venture to say that if I asked my Republican colleagues if they want their constituents sending this information in I would hear a little bit of grumbling.

Canceled status; information regarding any felony convictions.

All these are State issues.

Information regarding voter registration in another State; information regarding military status; and overseas citizen information.

First of all, there is no documentation of massive voter fraud.

“The right to vote, and the sanctity and privacy of the vote, is protected by the U.S. Constitution, including the Fifth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Due process. All of these allow you to have a degree of privacy. It is an obligation of your administration,” which is a letter to President Trump that I am reading from, “to preserve the sanctity and privacy of the vote, not to undermine it as would be the case if Texas were to comply with the PACEI’s unconscionable request. The only approved government use of voter registration data, outside of voting, is jury selection, not a Presidential Advisory Commission of dubious purpose formed to search for non-consistent evidence to vindicate your false claim that you lost the popular vote by 2.9 million votes, the largest loss in American history, because millions of people who voted illegally.”

As you well know, that was a statement that no one can document by this present administration. So this Presidential Advisory Commission is a doubling down of an executive order to find a problem that does not exist. It is a solution, a false solution, seeking to find a problem. It is a dangerous proposition. It is an invasion of the privacy of the American people. And any good person who believes in the right to privacy, any conservative, liberal, moderate, anyone with any political philosophy who believes in the Constitution of the United States should stand arm in arm together against PACEI.

It is the beginning of Big Brother, the arm of Big Brother, the frightening Big Brother, to intrude into the homes of the American people and to secure information that is, in fact, challenging whether you can move from one State to the next, challenging whether or not you can have a voter card canceled or expired, challenging individuals who have been given pardons but had a felony, and challenging military persons who move from place to place. This is an insult, and this is

clearly voter suppression, not in any way a way to speak to the issue of fraud.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to take this very seriously. I have asked my State to stand down. I have asked the President to pull this request, and I, frankly, believe this executive order should be eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD two documents related to this.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 6, 2017.

President DONALD J. TRUMP,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to urge you to rescind your May 11, 2017 Executive Order establishing the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity (PACEI) and to direct that the PACEI be dissolved immediately. The PACEI is charged with studying “the registration and voting processes used in Federal elections” and identifying “vulnerabilities in voting systems” that could lead to voter fraud. Many people, however, suspect that the real purpose of the Commission is not investigate widespread voter fraud, which every reputable study has already debunked as a myth, but to gather data to aid in future voter suppression efforts.

On June 28, 2017, PACEI Chair and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach wrote to the nation’s secretaries of state requesting extensive personal information on American voters threats to violate individual privacy. Specifically, the PACEI seeks to obtain, *inter alia*: “the full first and last names of registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of social security number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, cancelled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information.”

Releasing the confidential voter information sought by the PACEI which will be stored in an unsecure database on unsecured servers and accessible to the public is illegal, irresponsible, jeopardizes civil liberties and privacy rights, and puts our national security at risk.

It is important that all voters, including those in the 18th Congressional District of Texas whom I am privileged to represent, be fully protected. While supplying only public voter information may seem secure, the sad fact is that it is not. There is no publicly available record for voter registration information for any state in America. Such data set is protected under the principle of collective privacy, recognized by the Supreme Court in the landmark decision of *NAACP v. Alabama*, 377 U.S. 288, 84 S. Ct. 1302, 12 L. Ed. 2d 325 (1964), which held that compelled disclosure of affiliation with

groups engaged in advocacy may constitute an impermissible chilling effect on the freedom of association guaranteed by the First Amendment. The Court has affirmed this principle and it is now settled law. Accordingly, Texas cannot, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, supply the private voter information requested by the PACEI. Indeed, if the information sought was public as PACEI contends, there would be no need for it to request the information from state governments.

The right to vote, and the sanctity and privacy of the vote, is protected by the U.S. Constitution, including the Fifth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. It is an obligation of your administration to preserve the sanctity and privacy of the vote, not to undermine it as would be the case if Texas were to comply with the PACEI’s unconscionable request. The only approved government use of voter registration data, outside of voting, is jury selection, not a presidential advisory commission of dubious purpose formed to search for nonexistent evidence to vindicate your false claim that you lost the popular vote by 2.9 million votes, the largest loss in American history, because “millions of people who voted illegally.”

Voter suppression is real but the oft-repeated claim that American elections are rife with voter fraud is a myth. A comprehensive 2014 study published in *The Washington Post* found out of more than a billion votes cast only 31 credible instances of impersonation fraud from 2000 to 2014, and that event this tiny number was likely inflated because the study’s author counted not just voter fraud prosecutions or convictions but all credible claims. Numerous other reports have reached the same conclusion.

Finally, it should be noted that compliance with the PACEI’s voter data request would put the security of the nation’s electoral processes at risk. We know from recent and painful experience, including the cyberattacks on the Veterans Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, not to mention SONY and Yahoo, that large centralized databases are targets of opportunities for criminals, terrorists, and foreign adversaries. It would be the height of recklessness for Texas to provide the PACEI with personal information of millions of person via unsecured email address to be stored in under-secured databases on undersecured servers.

This is why the large majority of states, 44 states and the District of Columbia, have refused to comply with the PACEI’s data requests. To date, only five states have indicated they will cooperate with the PACEI and with a data set this small, any findings drawn by the PACEI will lack external validity and yield no generalizable conclusions. In view of all the circumstances extant, the most reasonable and accurate conclusion that can be reached about the PACEI is that it

is not intended to ferret out and prevent voter fraud, but to obtain information that can be used to refine voter suppression efforts.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to rescind your May 11, 2017 Executive Order and direct that the President’s Advisory Commission on Election Integrity be disbanded immediately. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Member of Congress.

[From Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas]

TRUMP’S VOTER FRAUD COMMISSION IS A FRAUD AND SHOULD BE DISBANDED NOW

Unable to cope with the brutal fact that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by 2.9 million votes, the largest vote deficit of any president in American history, Donald Trump tweeted that he would have won the popular vote but for “millions of people who voted illegally.” Instead of producing any credible evidence to support this claim, a hoax that has been repeatedly and decisively debunked by experts, the President doubled down and issued an Executive Order establishing the “Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity” (PACEI), appointing Kris Kobach, anti-immigration warrior and poster-child for voter fraud conspiratorialists everywhere, to lead the Commission.

It would be more accurate to characterize the PACEI as the “Presidential Advisory Commission on Vote Suppression.” Voter suppression is real but the oft-repeated claim that American elections are rife with voter fraud is a myth. According to a comprehensive 2014 study published in *The Washington Post*, out of more than a billion votes cast between 2000 and 2014, only 31 credible instances of impersonation fraud were found, and even this tiny number was likely inflated because the study’s author counted not just voter fraud prosecutions or convictions but all credible claims. Numerous other reports have reached the same conclusion.

Any lingering doubt regarding the true purpose of the PACEI should be laid to rest by the request made by Commissioner Kobach on June 28, 2017 when he wrote each of the nation’s state secretaries of state requesting that they provide the Commission with “the full first and last names of all registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of social security number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, cancelled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information.”

The information requested by the Commission will not prevent voter fraud. It will violate rather than protect voter privacy. And it will make it easier to craft legislation and devise campaign strategies intended to suppress the vote in urban clusters and among targeted demographic groups, particularly minority voters.

It is important that all voters, and the people of the 18th Congressional District of Texas whom I am privileged to represent, be fully protected. While supplying only public voter information may seem secure, the sad

fact is that it is not. There is no publicly accessible database of voter registration information in any of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. That is because information of this kind is protected from public disclosure under the settled principle of ‘collective privacy’ recognized by the Supreme Court in the landmark decision of *NAACP v. Alabama*, 377 U.S. 288, 84 S. Ct. 1302, 12 L. Ed. 2d 325 (1964), which held that compelled disclosure of affiliation with groups engaged in advocacy may constitute an impermissible chilling effect on the freedom of association guaranteed by the First Amendment, a holding that has been affirmed repeatedly.

Accordingly, neither Texas nor any state can, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, supply the voter information requested by the PACEI. Indeed, if the information sought was as public in nature as PACEI contends, there simply would be no need for it to request the information from state governments.

Trump’s voter suppression commission is a solution in search of a problem. Contrary to what Trump and Kobach would have the public believe, American elections are not rife with widespread voter fraud. Studies have shown that it is more likely an American “will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls.” No, the major ill affecting our election system is not that too many people vote due to voter fraud, but that too many people are prevented from voting due to vote suppression schemes such as discriminatory photo identification requirements, curtailment of early voting, too few polling stations leading to long lines and excessive wait times, purging of election rolls.

Even in the wholly unimaginable event that the commission created by Donald Trump and led by Kris Kobach could be trusted enough for states to cooperate by sharing their voter data, there is no reasonable basis for assuming that information would be kept secure and the privacy of voters protected. Recent cyberattacks have made clear the vulnerability of large central databases to cyberattack. An information security breach at the Department of Veterans Affairs compromised sensitive personal data of 26.5 million persons and cost the VA between \$100 million to \$500 million to remediate; another occurring at the Office of Personnel Management impacted 22 million current and former federal employees, many of whom held sensitive security clearances; and the attack on Yahoo, the mother of all security breaches, resulted in 1.5 billion user accounts being compromised.

Because large centralized databases are targets of opportunities for criminals, terrorists, and foreign adversaries, it would be the height of recklessness for Texas or any state to provide the PACEI with personal information of millions of persons via unsecured email address to be stored in undersecured databases on undersecured servers. One of the biggest strengths of the American election system is its decentralized nature.

Aggregating all voter data into one centralized database with questionable security protections makes that data highly vulnerable to a cyberattack that could lead to the personal information of hundreds of millions of Americans being stolen and misused. Voter privacy and the integrity of the secret ballot are integral to American democracy. Voter privacy rights should and must be protected. This is especially true since we now know for certain that adversaries like Russia are actively involved in cyberwarfare campaigns to undermine our democracy.

There is no denying that our election system is under assault, but not in the way Trump imagines. Instead of wasting taxpayer money to fund an investigation into

voter fraud, which is as mythical as a unicorn, American democracy would be better served by focusing on and correcting the real problem with our elections—voter suppression and external, illegal, and international interference in our national elections.

I am not opposed to employing reasonable, legitimate, and workable means to safeguard the integrity of our electoral system and to protect the precious right to vote. But Trump’s Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity is incapable of doing either and thus should be disbanded and dissolved immediately.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by holding up this map, which indicates the colors of the individual States that are only slightly adhering to this Commission. The orange and the blue are individual States, some that are not adhering and some that are giving basic public information, but not all the personal information.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I hope we can collectively fight against the suppression of voters, and I thank him for alerting the American people to this severe attempt to perpetrate a wrongness, which is that there is voter fraud, and that we should not violate the privacy of Americans.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my fellow Texan and colleague for her timely remarks. I think the American public really would be interested in what she talked about with the criminal background history that this Commission wants.

I know that there are a lot of people—both Democrats and Republicans, quite frankly, people of all political stripes—that made mistakes when they were younger and now maybe they go and vote. They are good Americans. They assimilate themselves into society. They have learned from their mistakes, and they would be very disturbed to know that this sort of information about something that they did when they were 21 years old and now they are 40-something years old, they would be very disturbed to know that this type of information was being collected. I thank her for raising that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), my friend, to also speak on this issue. I thank him for taking the time to come out here today and share some of the concerns that he has.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank the gentleman from Texas for sponsoring this CBC Special Order hour. It is a great responsibility and a responsibility that he has done remarkably well in governing the time and the topics on which we speak. This is a timely topic, Mr. Speaker.

In a single decision, the U.S. Supreme Court set ablaze decades of progress by overturning critical portions of the Voting Rights Act. Four years after *Shelby County v. Holder*, voter protections that many Americans rely on are again under assault.

Following that decision, we saw an eruption of unjust voting laws. It is an unfortunate historical fact that, in the

absence of Federal safeguards, some States will erect prejudicial barriers to voting. States previously under Federal overview were emboldened and, shortly after the ruling issued, blatantly added discriminatory rules that directly affected minority communities.

Sadly, one of the most significant and imminent threats to accessing the polls comes directly from the administration. Since the inauguration, the Trump administration has withdrawn from longstanding legal challenges to discriminatory voter laws and created the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity that will investigate the President’s wildly unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. These sorts of actions and rhetoric only reassure States that discriminatory voting laws will be tolerated and upheld in this administration.

I urge Congress to take responsibility and restore vital voter protections that have secured the integrity of our democracy for more than 50 years. Although the *Shelby* decision was one of the most disruptive judicial decisions in recent American history, passing good voting rights legislation will redeem America’s promise of a fair vote for everyone of eligible age.

It appears that protecting America’s basic right to vote will be a task reborn with every generation. Obstacles to voting are no longer as blatantly obvious as literacy tests and poll taxes. Unjust voter ID laws, voter intimidation, and unfair gerrymandering create barriers to the polls for individuals from all skin colors and age groups.

Although these actions appear insurmountable, they are not. Voter suppression is an affront to the Constitution and will not be tolerated. If we continue to resist all attempts to turn back voter protections, we will be successful and once again stand proudly on the right side of history.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this Nation appears to be going in reverse. Gains that have been made by people who weren’t necessarily considered citizens when they first arrived here, but property, have had to look to these rulings and laws being created in order for them to have the rights every other American has.

The hands that built this great building could not vote, were property. But it is a beautiful symbol of this Nation’s history. The ancestors of the people that helped build these beautiful buildings here will be rolling over in their graves to learn that equality and rights for all are still under attack.

So, Mr. Speaker, the CBC and, I hope, the whole Congress will be vigilant in this area, making sure that all Americans, regardless of where they come from, where they started, and when they were allowed and even seen as citizens, have the right to vote in this great country.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, particularly for pointing out about the

hands that built this building. That is something that is not widely known, that the hands that built this building were not hands of free men but hands of slaves that built this building that we stand under today, that people come and admire from all around the world, and we admire this building as a symbol of freedom. But the hands that built it were not free hands.

And of course what followed emancipation in this country—Jim Crow, voter suppression, and all of those things—once we finally got past the late sixties and seventies, to see some of that coming back again is very, very disturbing, and I want to thank him for his timely comments on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY). I thank her spending so much time here on the House floor working the Special Order hour, and particularly when it comes to the thing that we are so worried about right now, which is the voter suppression commission.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman VEASEY for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to stand on this floor, but when I think that tonight I have to stand here and talk about the topic that the Congressional Black Caucus comes to the House floor to speak out against is a sad day.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my classmate and colleague and friend, Congressman MARC VEASEY, for taking a leadership role and for making that clarion call to ask us to come.

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Many of us will come tonight and speak out. Several of us will file our message so it can be recorded. Others will be back in their districts fighting for voting rights.

This is something we have to do because, unfortunately, it has been over 50 years since President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which has been the most powerful tool in defending the voting rights of minorities.

The Voting Rights Act, as you have heard tonight and you will continue to hear, outlawed the harassment, the intimidation, and the violence that many African Americans experienced when trying to exercise their right to vote.

It ended some of the most overtly discriminatory practices in our country's history by banning literacy tests, appointing Federal examiners in certain problematic areas to register voters and monitor elections, and criminalizing voter intimidation threats and coercion.

Also key to the Voting Rights Act, you have heard many of our attorneys explain it and talk about the creation of the preclearance process that required certain places with some of the worst histories of discrimination to gain approval from a Federal court or the Department of Justice before making election changes.

However, Mr. Speaker, during my first term in Congress, I became a part

of this history. It was in 2013 that the United States Supreme Court struck down this crucial provision of the Voting Rights Act in the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, opening the door for States to reduce—I am going to say that again, Mr. Speaker—opening the door to reduce the electoral power of minority communities.

And with that door open, many States are taking this opportunity to pass a slew or a wave of laws, including strict voter ID requirements, early voting cutbacks, and registration restrictions, making it harder for many hard-working Americans to vote. That is just not right. Every citizen should have the right to vote.

Following the 2016 election, President Trump falsely claimed that millions voted illegally, perpetuating the myth of voter fraud long used to justify restrictive legislation that suppresses voters in low-income areas. I stand here today to tell you that it is not true.

And when the Congressional Black Caucus hears the President of these United States using terms like “voter fraud” or “illegally voted,” we can read between the lines, Mr. Speaker. He is signaling his intent, in my opinion, to suppress the vote. He is signaling the support for efforts that will make it even harder for poor people, people of color, women, elderly people, to vote, one of the fundamental rights that we have to vote.

While the legislative maneuvers to restrict our citizens' fundamental right to vote should shock the conscience, it has not, and that is why we are standing on this floor today. That is why we are asking Democrats and Republicans to work together to correct this wrong.

We have witnessed the history of some 50-plus years of what happened to many people in some of our Southern States. Mr. Speaker, it is just not right, and that is why we are here today.

As former President Barack Obama said: “This is something that has constantly been disproved.” As a matter of fact, “This is fake news.”

Now, one of my colleagues came to the floor tonight and said this is not a Democrat or a Republican issue. Well, let me say it a little differently. This should not be a Democrat or Republican issue; but if it were a bipartisan issue, we wouldn't be standing here in this Special Order hour demanding and asking that we come together, as Democrats and Republicans, and restore the voting rights.

So let me be very clear. The Congressional Black Caucus, through the leadership of our chairman, Congressman CEDRIC RICHMOND, through the leadership of our power-of-the-hour chair, Congressman MARC VEASEY, and the other members of the Congressional Black Caucus, one of the largest minority caucuses in this House, we stand ready to advocate, we stand ready to protect those who we come here to protect.

So as elected officials, we have a responsibility to ensure the right of “one person, one vote,” and part of this responsibility includes making it easier, Mr. Speaker, not harder for citizens to vote. And we will not stop our quest in ensuring justice for all Americans.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BEATTY. I really appreciate her participating again and her comments, and we are going to take her call and continue to push on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my friend and colleague up from the great State of Pennsylvania. Representative DWIGHT EVANS, to also speak about this subject. Of course, throughout the history of African Americans, Philadelphia and Pennsylvania have played a very critical role. I am glad that my colleague from Pennsylvania is stepping up and speaking about this very timely issue of voter suppression in the wake of *Shelby County*.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the great State of Texas, Congressman VEASEY, for his leadership under Congressman RICHMOND, and for what he and Delegate STACEY PLASKETT have been providing over the last couple of weeks.

Right now, as Members of Congress, we are in what I call an Article I, section 1 moment. Article I, section 1 in the Constitution grants us this power. We need to harness the power of the process to ensure that accountability and transparency for Philadelphians, Pennsylvanians, and all the American people.

We know that voting is a fundamental right, and we know that the Federal Government should not be in the business of dealing with personal information of voters nationwide. Philadelphians, Pennsylvanians, and Americans have a right to privacy. Myself and my colleagues before you today intend to do everything we can to ensure privacy is guaranteed and protected.

The Trump administration has yet to instill confidence and garner respect from the American people. Voting is a right that cannot and will not be taken away. The right to vote is a core American value and guiding principle that must be protected and not tampered with in any way.

Believe me when I tell you, President Trump, we know what you are trying to do here. We see the actions of your administration for what they are. Our neighborhoods are at risk of voter suppression, and we cannot and will not stand for it.

Last week, I was proud to join my colleagues, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairman RICHMOND, and the United States Senator from New Jersey, when they stood up last week and introduced a piece of legislation to revoke President Trump's executive order.

I am proud to stand with the Governor of my State and my friend, Governor Tom Wolf, who has been very outspoken in speaking out for Pennsylvanians all across the Commonwealth and clearly told the President he will not disclose personal PA voter information.

I want to leave you with a quote from Dr. King: "We may have all come on different ships, but we are in the same boat now."

I have lived my entire life in the City of Philadelphia and know that it is a sanctuary city. We are so much stronger when we celebrate our differences and use them as strengths to uplift us.

We will not accept this voter suppression. Together, we will ensure the choir of our voices are heard loud and clear. We have an obligation to build a stronger tomorrow for all of our neighborhoods.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus to send a message, a message and a voice that we will not just sit here idly by. We will not allow this process to just run roughshod.

As I said from the beginning, this is an Article I, section 1 moment where we all recognize that we, in Congress, Democrat and Republican alike, recognize that we have an obligation and responsibility to the American public. And this is not about partisanship. This is about a fundamental right, and we don't take it lightly.

So I applaud the leadership, again, of my colleague from the great State of Texas, for what he is providing here, and all the members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments and appreciate him taking time out to talk about this very critical announcement.

As soon as everyone in the Black community, Black communities around the country, and elected officials around the country who are concerned about voter suppression and other tools and tactics that have been used to suppress the African-American vote, we went to action, and I appreciate that the gentleman was one of the first people to step up and appreciate his participation tonight.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, who was not able to make it here this evening, will be including a statement in the RECORD. She represents the 30th Congressional District of Texas and is my next-door neighbor. She represents Dallas and the southern suburbs of Dallas. I appreciate her weighing in on this topic as well.

Mr. Speaker, the foundation of American democracy is that, no matter who you are, we are all equal once we step into that voting booth. And the courage that has been displayed by brave foot soldiers who risked and, in some cases, gave their lives to guarantee that constitutional promise was fulfilled must never be forgotten, and this is really important to point out.

I mean, we have Representative JOHN LEWIS, who is a hero of the civil rights movement. But I always encourage people to watch the documentary, "Eyes on the Prize" so they can see how people were treated, how people were treated by law enforcement, how people were treated by people who were in positions of power, people who were active in the community, people who belonged to the Lions Club, belonged to the Elks Club, the way they treated people who were simply trying to register to vote.

There is one scene that I will never forget; it was about a woman who was trying to go and vote, and she was being kicked and shoved and hit and knocked to the ground by law enforcement in Alabama for simply trying to exercise her right to vote that was given to her in the early 1900s when women in this country were finally given the right of suffrage.

It is really in their memory that Congress originally passed the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. And for years, both Republicans and Democrats reauthorized the Voting Rights Act, agreeing that equal access to the polls must be preserved for generations to come.

But sadly, Mr. Speaker, in 2013, that tradition dramatically changed. The Supreme Court ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* struck down section 4 of the Voting Rights Act and made Congress responsible for updating the VRA. The Court has left it to Congress to create a new formula for determining which States and other jurisdictions should be discovered under section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to ensure protection against discrimination.

But 4 years later, we can confidently say that the Supreme Court ruling set into motion what most of us feared—that minorities and low-income Americans would have to face unfair and punitive barriers from exercising their most basic right as American citizens, and that is the right to vote.

□ 2000

In the years since the *Shelby County* decision, Republican legislatures nationwide have been in power to unleash an avalanche of purposely restrictive laws that have been aimed to keep, again, mostly Black and Latino voters away from the poll. Even when you do discovery and when you look into why these laws were passed by State legislatures, it is clear what the intent was.

It is a tactic that the Republican Party has indirectly endorsed, since they believe that trying to earn the vote of the growing minority population, that they would rather keep them away from the polls altogether.

Prior to *Shelby*, States with a history of voter suppression and discriminatory practices were required to preclear any changes in their election laws with the Department of Justice prior to enactment. But now, in the absence of an updated VRA, States no longer require the DOJ's approval.

I want to talk about my own State, the State of Texas, which has really served as an incubator for the suppressive tactics that Republicans nationwide have been eager to enact for years. I saw this up close and personal in the 8 years that I spent in the Texas Legislature, where I saw Texas Republicans enact SB 14, which severely restricted the types of IDs that voters could bring to the polls in order to cast the ballot. Texas Republicans claimed that limiting acceptable IDs would prevent widespread in-person voter fraud. As vice chair of the Voter Identification and Voter Fraud Select Committee in the Texas state house, I witnessed how Texas Republicans failed to produce any piece of evidence to prove that massive voter impersonation was occurring statewide.

Hearing after hearing—you can go back and look at the record, going back to 2005—I and my other colleagues who served on the committee and who were concerned about some of the voter suppression tactics asked the question: Show us evidence that voter suppression is taking place. We have time here during this legislative session.

That was what we would ask over and over again, and not one person could bring any evidence that this had happened.

Their flawed argument justified limiting voter IDs and instead favored an approach that would exclude student IDs but actually say that it was okay to use a concealed handgun license as a form of ID.

What is interesting about that is that these student IDs, campus law enforcement, which, in the State of Texas, where I am from, again, if a kid has alcohol or if someone is roaming around campus and the police need to be able to verify who they are and identify them, that student ID that is issued by a State university in the State of Texas serves as ID for law enforcement personnel on those campuses to be able to verify whether that student is, in fact, who they are and belongs on that campus. That same ID, again, that is issued by the State of Texas could not be used to go and vote. It just doesn't make any sense.

When the law was enacted, of course, the DOJ blocked the measure. However, hours after the *Shelby* decision, Governor Perry enacted Texas' restrictive voter ID law. I became a named plaintiff in the case because I knew that, despite Republicans' claims that the law would disproportionately disenfranchise Latino and African-American voters—the State's own estimates showed that it would potentially disenfranchise over 600,000 Texans who are registered but do not have one of the required forms of ID. And there are lots of different reasons why people may or may not have an ID.

If they were born in a foreign country and they are now American citizens, they may have a hard time getting access to some of those documents. They may not have the money

or the transportation to go to the county that they were born in to be able to get the documents that they need in order to get one of these IDs. Again, there are costs and there are transportation and geographic barriers that may take place.

You may have people who were born in the country by midwives, and they are particularly African-American baby boomers and older that migrated from places like Longview, Texas; Marshall, Texas; Tyler, Texas, and they weren't really even raised in those cities. They were raised in smaller towns outside of those cities and they may not have those proper forms of ID.

Remember, segregation was very rampant back then in Texas, and many people were born by midwives, were born in their houses and what have you. There are variations of spellings of last names. I have that in my own family. There are just so many other examples of that.

I am proud to report that two Federal courts, including the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which is easily considered by most to be the most conservative appeals court in the country, have found the law to be discriminatory in its intent and its effect. Despite this victory, we knew that Texas was only the beginning. We have heard about so many other laws around the country that exclude people from being able to register to vote unless they have a passport, or unless they have their birth certificate, which makes it almost impossible for nonprofits to set up a table at a busy grocery store, for instance, on a Saturday and do any sort of voter registration. There are just all sorts of issues out there. There are organizations like King Street Patriots, for instance, that pride themselves on their ability to try to suppress the minority vote. Again, Texas was only the beginning. And, sadly, Mr. Speaker, unless we can find a new way to come together to do what is right when it comes to suffrage in this country, it seems like this is going to be something that we have to fight for a long time.

Now, sadly, I am ashamed to say that our President has also taken a page out of the Republican playbook and has begun to perpetuate the same myths about widespread voter fraud that, sadly, we have been fighting since the Reconstruction era, Mr. Speaker. Very, very, very sad.

Nearly 3 months after winning the Presidency, President Trump could not handle the fact that, despite winning the Presidency, he lost the popular vote. And unsatisfied with the results, President Trump does what he does best: he went to Twitter to blame his unpopularity on widespread voter fraud.

And, worse, now he has created this Presidential commission on election integrity. It is a sham commission that will, no doubt, work to justify claims that elections are being compromised by our own citizens and serve as a cata-

lyst to continue the wave of voter suppression and intimidation that we have witnessed across this country.

I am proud that the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Asian Pacific American Caucus have all gotten together to introduce legislation to ensure that not a single dollar from the taxpayers is spent towards this phony commission.

Again, I think that everybody should be concerned about this commission. Any commission that wants to gather private information on citizens, put it in a database, information that—quite frankly, mistakes that people made back when they were in college. There are a lot of people out there that I know, that I went to high school and college with, people that I have known around the Fort Worth and Dallas community for a long time, all around the State of Texas, they made mistakes when they were younger. Maybe it was a DWI. Maybe it was some other sort of issue, but they have assimilated themselves back into society. They are working. They are paying taxes. And the fact that this database would want to take the mistakes that they made in their youth and put them in this database and to look at whether or not they are committing some sort of fraud is just something that—again, doesn't matter if you are Democrat or Republican, there are a lot of people out there who made mistakes when they were younger. It is just awful that this could come back to haunt them.

The fact is that the voter fraud myth has been debunked by various reputable research organizations, including the ACLU, the Brennan Center for Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, and the Pew Research Center, to name a few. But that has not changed the fact that Republicans and now our President want to turn back the clock on voting rights. It is really sad, Mr. Speaker.

The commission recently requested sensitive voter information as part of their fake investigation, and we are already seeing the effects. Out of fear of having their Social Security, voting history, party affiliation, again, their criminal background history that I talked about in a concentrated voter base, news sources have already reported voters deregistering to vote. That is sad because that is exactly the type of voter intimidation that Republicans want to nationalize.

House Republicans have purposely dragged their feet on updating the VRA and ignored their duty to uphold the Constitution and ensure the sacred right of all Americans to be able to cast their vote.

Even as these courts begin to rule against the purposely prejudiced tactics of these GOP State legislatures, it is up to us to bring our voices together and lift the veil on their true intentions. It is our duty now to stand up against these discriminatory practices that are being implemented nation-

wide, because the President's sham commission will have its first meeting this Wednesday, and we have to send one message loud and clear: We will not allow voter suppression to become normal. We have to make that clear.

I thank my colleagues for working alongside me in this fight, because every member of the Congressional Black Caucus is talking about this in their district when they are going back, townhalls, various other events that are out and about in their respective areas that they represent around our country to let them know what is in store.

I have got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that we will once again be able to ensure that the sacred right to vote is not denied to a single American. It has been overcome a lot. We are going to continue to overcome this, just like we have after the Reconstruction era, like we did in the 1960s, and we are going to fight this all the way until we get the fairness that we want.

I want to remind everybody that there is going to be a voter suppression forum tomorrow that members of the Congressional Black Caucus, along with the House Judiciary Democrats, will host on this very topic, voter suppression in the wake of Shelby County, which is the name of the Special Order that we are working on right now. And Members will hear from Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes and others about the President's voter fraud commission and the bipartisan backlash that it is facing. The forum will be live-streamed on the House Judiciary Democrats' Facebook page. I invite all Americans to join in this very important and crucial conversation that is going to be taking place on Wednesday.

I thank everybody again that came out to participate for this Special Order hour on voter suppression in the wake of what happened in Shelby County.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to speak out against voter suppression. Voter suppression is a serious issue that threatens the integrity of our elections. While the Congressional Black Caucus members have highlighted their numerous concerns, we should all be deeply involved in combating voter suppression and expanding access to the polls for all Americans—particularly in the wake of the destructive ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

When fellow Texan and former President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law, our country was in the midst of wrestling with literacy tests, the purging of voter rolls, and intimidation by those who wished to keep minorities and other vulnerable segments of the population from casting their ballots at the polls. It was a difficult time in our nation's history, but one that we seemingly overcame together in a broad recognition that all Americans should have equal access to the polls. The positive effects of the Voting Rights Act grew quickly apparent.

Following passage of the VRA, nearly 1 million black voters registered to vote within just four years, including over fifty percent of the black voting age population in every southern state. We witnessed the number of black elected officials in the South more than double, from 72 to 159, following the 1966 elections. By the mid-1980s, there were more African Americans in public office across the South than throughout the rest of the nation combined.

More than fifty years later, we are once again faced with the same fight under a different, more sinister guise. The United States Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby v. Holder* has brought our nation back to our darkest times in history. Discrimination on the basis of race is a persistent reality throughout many localities in states once protected by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act—including my home state of Texas. Absent these protections, many voters are at risk of losing their fundamental right to vote.

On May 11, 2017, President Trump issued an executive order that would create an “election integrity” commission. The stated purpose of this commission was to combat voter fraud, but we know the true meaning behind an executive order of this nature. It is to repeat the egregious mistakes of our past and once again prevent legitimate voters from exercising their constitutional rights to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns of the Congressional Black Caucus and the concerns of countless Americans are worthy of our time in Congress. We must speak out against thinly-veiled commissions meant to suppress the vote. We must bolster the Voting Rights Act to its former power and encourage others to combat voter suppression and protect unfettered access to the ballot.

COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise and ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, tonight, as we come before the body, we have come back on a topic we have been here before on. It is really the hidden enemy, I guess if you would, of people and trying to get a drug pricing system, something where their community pharmacist, the independent pharmacist, it is that middle man called the PBM, the pharmacy benefit manager, who simply snuck in many years ago.

□ 2015

It originally started as a good idea so that you could collaborate, you could get better drug pricing, you could get it to the consumer through rebates and

through concessions. And as in all things, I guess, good ideas and greed just get in the way sometimes.

We are at a point where this is an issue that I want to continue to highlight. We are going to do so in several ways. We are going to talk about some issues. I spoke with colleagues on the floor before about the really terrible actions of many in the PBM community, especially the largest ones that control over 80 percent of the market. There are only three of those that really control almost the entire marketplace of this and control plans that folks would understand very quickly. They control where you go, how much you pay, the formularies. It is down to that kind of a problem.

Last year, when the world began to wake up to these issues of pricing and all of this came to light, they began to question why these drugs were costing so much, such as the EpiPen. Well, what they began to find out was that these were problematic issues. But if you wanted to really look at the baseline, you had to look at the pharmacy benefit managers, and you had to understand what they were doing that was causing a great deal of problems.

We also have to go back to the basics. Community and independent pharmacists fill a critical niche in the healthcare system, serving the primary healthcare providers for over 62 million Americans. Community pharmacists are some of the most easily accessible health professionals, particularly in our rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, this is an area that I really have talked about before. We talk about the healthcare chain being a complete chain, and it is not just the doctors and the hospitals; it is the pharmacist who is typically the face of healthcare for those after they have gone to their doctors or come out from the hospital to get the medicine that will continue to keep them healthy.

You see, community pharmacists dispense roughly 40 percent of prescriptions nationwide, and a higher percentage in rural areas, such as mine. These community pharmacists regularly interact with their patients outside the pharmacy. They go to church with them. They go to shop with them at the local grocery store. The pharmacies are the sponsors of kids' Little League teams. They are the ones who have the closest personal relationships to the healthcare chain, and they are a trusted source of medical care and advice.

Pharmacists are also able to better treat patients' illnesses with their regular interactions, identifying potential risk factors early on. For example, independent community pharmacists play a key role in ensuring a patient properly uses their medication. In fact, 83 percent of community pharmacists perform the critical patient-care role of providing medication adherent services. Patients' failure to properly take their medication costs the healthcare system almost \$3 billion and contributes to 125,000 deaths annually.

Face-to-face counseling by a trusted pharmacist has proven to be the most effective method for ensuring patients take their medications, saving thousands of lives and billions of dollars annually.

Mr. Speaker, independent and community pharmacists provide multiple and valuable services, and we can talk about these services and the importance of a community pharmacist. I would be remiss if I did not mention the recent and tragic passing of someone known well in the pharmacists' community for his contributions there.

While I did not know John Carson personally, his death had reverberations throughout the pharmacists' community. Mr. Carson was from San Antonio, Texas, and owned and ran his business there, Oakdell Pharmacy, for almost 50 years. He and his wife were tragically killed in a car accident on July 7, but the legacy Mr. Carson left behind as a father, a pharmacist, and former president of both the Texas Pharmacy Association and the National Community Pharmacists Association will live on. Tonight we mourn his passing but celebrate his achievements.

I could mention individual pharmacists and their work on behalf of their patients for the rest of the evening, and I could have probably every Member of this body do the same. Instead, I will provide some information that shows the great impact on services the individuals have had.

Sixty-five percent of community pharmacists offer home or work delivery; 68 percent of community pharmacists offer immunizations; 83 percent provide medication therapy and management services; and 67 percent of community pharmacists provide monetary support to five or more community organizations. These are the guys you see sponsoring the Little League teams, the chili cook-offs, and that are true participants in our neighborhoods and towns.

Unfortunately, the community pharmacists are in jeopardy across the country, in part, due to anticompetitive behavior and the lack of transparency surrounding practices of the pharmacy benefit managers. They have taken our community pharmacist, and they have abused their trust. Pharmacy benefit managers, especially in the system that we have today, are trying, I believe personally, to get rid of our community independent pharmacists because they have their own chain, their own distribution, and they own the supply chain. When they do, they want to take everything else out, and we have talked about that on many occasions here.

So as we continue tonight, we are going to talk about these issues, as we go from pharmacists and what they have done well, some new issues that have come to light, some lawsuits, also some audits that have come out that show the real problem that we are seeing with this community, and also that