

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, we have determined that compliance with the subpoena will be consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,
Member of Congress.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE JOHN P. SARBANES, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JOHN P. SARBANES, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 30, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives that we have been served with a subpoena for documents issued by the District Court for the District of Maryland in Benisek v Lamone.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, we have determined that compliance with the subpoena will be consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

JOHN P. SARBANES,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: VOTER SUPPRESSION AND MUSLIM BAN

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 to 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, this was a sad week for our country. We saw anger, despair, and chaos at American airports when people from all different types of backgrounds from the Middle East were banned from coming into the United States. We had individuals who were green card holders who were denied entry into the United States. We had individuals who were interpreters for our United States military, who kept them safe in the Middle East, who were denied the right to come into the country. It was a sad day in our country's history.

This past weekend, I took my son to an exhibit at one of the synagogues in Fort Worth, Texas, where I live. It was an exhibit on Jews in baseball. There was a picture of Hank Greenberg and Joe DiMaggio. Joe DiMaggio, an American lexicon, is about as American as you get; but, in looking at the exhibit

and at the caption that was next to it, it read, while Joe DiMaggio was fighting for our country in World War II, the United States Government listed his parents as "enemy aliens." In revisiting that sort of sad chapter in our history, when individuals were treated that way in our country, I think it is very sad, Mr. Speaker.

We have a lot of Members who would like to express their discontent at what happened. I yield to our chair, Mr. CEDRIC RICHMOND, from the State of Louisiana, to come and address us because what we have to talk about tonight is very serious.

Mr. RICHMOND. I thank Congressman VEASEY for the work that he does in representing Fort Worth, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honor to be the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus in that we represent almost 80 million Americans, 17 million of whom are African American; but the real reason is that it is a talented group of 49 people, and we are going to need each and every one of them to keep track of this rapid, schizophrenic style of governing that we are dealing with. I will just talk about the two most egregious things from this past week, which are the allegations of voter fraud and his nomination of a person to run the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and his unconstitutional ban on Muslims.

Since 2010, 20 States have restricted voting rights by enacting discriminatory voter ID and proof of citizenship laws, illegally purging thousands of proper voters from the rolls, cutting back early voting, limiting voter registration, and engaging in other suppressive tactics. These laws were put in place to combat the notion of voter fraud despite the fact that there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the United States.

More than a dozen recent investigations and studies all show voter fraud to be virtually nonexistent. A 2014 Washington Post investigation found 31 incidents of voter fraud in the more than 1 billion ballots that were cast in elections at all levels of government from 2000 to 2014. Of the more than 137 million ballots cast in the 2016 election, election and law enforcement officials in all 50 States have yet to report any indications of widespread voter fraud.

But, if there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud, what reason could anyone have, including the President, for this claim? The truth is that Republicans have used the voter fraud lie to restrict voting rights for years. Voter ID laws have been sponsored by Republicans and have been passed overwhelmingly by Republican legislatures.

Richard Posner, a conservative U.S. circuit court judge appointed by President Reagan, has called the concerns about voter fraud a mere fig leaf that is intended to justify laws that appear to be aimed at limiting voting by minorities, especially Blacks. In July 2016, a U.S. circuit court struck down

North Carolina's law, calling it the most restrictive voting law North Carolina has seen since the era of Jim Crow. The judges charged that Republican lawmakers had targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision.

Let me just turn very briefly to the President's ill-advised, unconstitutional executive order that purportedly promotes national security. Keeping America safe is a top priority for all of us, but this order is wrong. It is wrong because it makes us less safe, and it is wrong because it goes against our American values. This is the latest in President Trump's series of actions that shows that his number one priority is short-term shows of intolerance instead of the long-term security of the American people.

Actions by the Oval Office directly affect people's lives. When the President is making policy up on the fly, it has real harmful consequences in the lives of everyday Americans. The fact that the Secretary of Homeland Security—a committee in Congress on which I serve—was not included in discussions about implementing the executive order, even though this Department is in charge of its implementation, is clear evidence of a broken system. Shutting out the mothers, children, fathers, and families who are fleeing the same violence that we fight against is exactly what ISIS and similar groups want us to do, and it only strengthens their hands. This haphazard order does nothing to keep Americans safe. In fact, it hurts our efforts to fight against terrorism.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, to my colleague from Texas that the President of the United States, when addressing Liberty University, cited "2 Corinthians," while most church-going people in the country would say "Second Corinthians." He cited 2 Corinthians 2:17, which reads, wherever the Lord is, there is liberty and freedom, but there can't be liberty and freedom without meaningful access to the voting polls. He didn't need to get to chapter 3. He really could have just stopped at the first few paragraphs of the Second Corinthians, which read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who comforts us in our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble."

The question becomes: Why go to Liberty University and offer your Christian values?

It always talks about the least of these in the Bible and what we are doing to help others and to do unto others as you would have them do unto you so that, as soon as mothers and children and families are fleeing persecution and certain death, we put a wall up around our country, shut down our airports, and say: We don't care what trouble you are in. You just can't come here.

That goes against everything that this country was founded on. It goes against my Christian values, and it

goes against any purported Christian values of anyone's in these United States of America.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the chairman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I did not mention that we are also talking about voting rights, which is very important on the eve of the President making the selection for the next Supreme Court Justice of the United States.

I know, with Representative PLASKETT's representing the Virgin Islands and understanding the importance of voting rights, that that is very significant. I yield to the gentlewoman and thank her for being a voice in terms of refugees, immigration rights, and on the very important issue of voting rights.

Ms. PLASKETT. I thank Mr. VEASEY.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, my friend and colleague, the Honorable CEDRIC RICHMOND, for his continued leadership of this caucus and of his leadership on the issues impacting Black America and other minority communities across this great Nation.

Indeed, this evening, we are discussing not only minorities in this country, but those who are down-trodden and other individuals around the world who look to America for refuge, strength, and democracy.

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I also thank my colleague, the Honorable MARC VEASEY of Fort Worth, Texas, for joining me in chairing this evening's Special Order hour, and also my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues who are joining us this evening to speak on these important issues.

Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to speak to those two very important issues that go to the fabric of our founding: our ability to grow, diversify as a Nation, by bringing in the tired and the poor, the innovators, the ones who bring new changes to this country, and continue its dynamic growth, as well as voting rights.

Last week, President Trump—among a number of other things—expressed unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2016 Presidential election. The remarks that we heard would appear to be inaccurate, reckless, and dangerous to our democracy in some of our opinions.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are here this evening to highlight the real voter fraud in this country, and that is the continued attempts to suppress minority voting rights across many States as well as the outright denial of the right to vote for millions of Americans living in the territories.

I want to underscore that the fight for equal voting rights for minorities in this country did not end with the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

In fact, today, more than 50 years after our esteemed colleague JOHN LEWIS and others courageously marched on Selma, we have seen the United States Supreme Court strike

down one of its most important protections.

Within hours of that decision, States were already moving forward with restrictive voter ID laws, which had already been rejected as discriminatory under the Voting Rights Act.

Six of the 16 States that passed voter ID laws since 2010 have a documented history of discriminating against minority voters.

The State of Alabama, in 2014, began enforcing a controversial voter ID law that required voters to show a State-issued ID in order to vote, and then announced plans to close 31 driver's license offices—most of them, ironically, in rural, impoverished, majority Black counties—making it even harder for residents to get the most common form of ID used to vote.

In addition to the Supreme Court's action, a Federal Court in a 2015 ruling used a racist, century-old opinion of the Supreme Court to uphold the denial of voting rights to American citizens in my home district of the United States Virgin Islands, and the citizens and residents of America's island territories.

They are called the insular cases, and the opinion was authored, ironically, by the same justice who wrote *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

March marks 100 years that my district has been a part of this country, but our service dates back to its very founding through the Virgin Islander and Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. He would be, I think, very upset to find out that people from the island in which he came could not vote for their President and Commander in Chief, even though the Virgin Islands and the territories have the highest rates of military service in the United States and have exponentially higher rates of casualties per capita in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We believe we have earned the right to take part in this democracy.

In another example, last year, a Federal appeals court decisively struck down a North Carolina voter identification law and noted its provisions deliberately “target African Americans with almost surgical precision.” That is a quote of the court in an effort to depress Black turnout at the polls. That, to me, sounds like voter fraud and voter suppression.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of the real voter fraud happening across this country.

The members of this caucus continue to work to ensure that all American citizens, regardless of their race, income or location, can participate in this great democracy; and we implore the President to direct his efforts to investigate voter fraud at these and other issues.

We want to, as the Congressional Black Caucus, address another issue, because we don't just represent African Americans or minorities here in this country. We want to address an issue that is of great concern to me and

members of this caucus—and as demonstrated by massive protests this weekend and right across the street here this evening at the Supreme Court—the concern of a large majority of America, and that is the President's executive order to ban refugees entering into this country.

Banning entry to people fleeing persecution is perhaps as diametrically opposed to the foundational fabric of this country as you can get.

Mr. Speaker, not only is the President's refugee ban mean-spirited and misguided, it undermines our democracy, undermines our efforts to thwart terrorism, and is an affront to all who have sacrificed to defend it.

Viewing all refugees fleeing as suspects shows an extremely myopic understanding of the real threats and plays to extremist propaganda.

The refugee ban will not make us safe. It would have done nothing to prevent the 9/11 terrorist attacks, nor the others that followed. The terrorists of those attacks were American citizens, some of whom were even on the terrorist watch list and still allowed to legally purchase deadly weapons used to carry out their terrorist plot.

If this President and Congress want to protect the American people from terrorism, they should pass the no fly, no buy legislation that House Democrats stood to support.

Mr. Speaker, there are many of my colleagues here this evening who would love to speak on this issue.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the Garden State of New Jersey, Mrs. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, who will speak to this House on the issues that the Congressional Black Caucus is taking up this evening.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

In his first full week as President, Donald Trump continued to make a mockery of the ideas upon which our Nation was founded. In addition, his de facto Muslim ban is contrary to the national security interests of the United States. His actions are not only discriminatory and bigoted, but also reckless, dangerous, and counterproductive to any authentic effort to defeat terrorism.

As a member of the House Homeland Security Committee, I am concerned this will only serve to stoke anti-American sentiment across the globe, including our international partners committed to eradicating global terror threats.

My colleagues have outlined the ways in which men and women they represent have been impacted at this present moment, and highlight the uncertainty that those constituents feel about the future. But we cannot forget those who have come to this country in pursuit of the future that the American Dream has promised.

Close to 17,000 students from the seven affected countries attend U.S. colleges and universities. The 12th District of New Jersey represents these

men and women, both young and old, at a multitude of 2-year, 4-year, and technical institutions.

The President of Princeton University—one of the most revered institutions in the world, housed in the heart of my district—released a statement concerned that the success of Princeton and many other institutions of higher education across this Nation depend on America's ability to attract and engage with talented people from around the world.

Rutgers University, the flagship public university in my State, has students, researchers, and professors from all seven countries on Trump's barred entry list who are currently traveling outside of this country. The impact on university personnel was felt most immediately after the executive order went into effect.

Two Iranian nationals who are associate professors at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth were detained Saturday upon arrival at Boston Logan International Airport. Today I talked with university officials in my district who have faculty members that need to return home in order to renew visas, but are afraid to leave. At another college, one-fourth of their applicants come from the countries that are impacted by this ban.

A constituent in East Brunswick, who is a non-Syrian political refugee, sits in limbo as only one of her four minor children passed through our already thorough and extensive processing and was approved for a visa. USCIS put a hold on the process of the remaining three due to lack of communication and direction and understanding from this travel ban.

By feeding off of fear, hatred, and bigotry, this administration's incendiary Muslim ban has created confusion, disruption, and chaos that is rippling around the world.

As our Federal agencies and international partners seek to understand and combat this meritless policy, I call on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, on which I sit, to hold an immediate hearing with leadership at the Department of Homeland Security to review concerning reports about the crafting and execution of this President's order.

I also requested that the House Homeland Security Committee, which I also serve on, to move up its February 7 hearing on this issue so that we may urgently address the national security implications of this administration's actions.

In short, Mr. Speaker, this is the United States of America. We respect diversity because this is a nation founded and made great because of immigrants. We are not going to stand by and allow President Trump, with his un-American ideals, to push forward on American policies. Understand that we will resist at every turn.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey for her comments.

Now I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from the State of Illinois (Ms. KELLY). I thank Ms. KELLY for all of her work on so many issues that are important. I know that voting rights is particularly important to her with her representing the Chicago suburbs and the city of Chicago itself.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. I thank Congressman VEASEY and Congresswoman PLASKETT for holding tonight's CBC Special Order hour.

With so much going on in our Nation right now, it is important that all Americans take seriously our responsibility to be guardians of our democracy. We owe it to those who came before us and those who will be here long after us to keep this democracy and its values moving forward, and reject the rhetoric and policies that take us backwards.

I was reminded of this just a week ago when over 3 million Americans of all ages, races, and religions, marched for women's rights, justice, and equal rights. Three million, a powerful resistance to concerning policies that we are seeing come out of the White House.

Just last night I was with scores of activists and families at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, protesting President Trump's executive action barring refugees from entering the United States.

I wish that things hadn't come to this. It is a tragedy that these United States, the shining beacon of democracy around the world, the land that welcomes the tired, the poor, and the huddled masses has witnessed a President in his first week in office attempt to strip away our values as an inclusive democracy with an unconstitutional executive order and Muslim ban.

Our Constitution, our laws, our democracy is what we must hold dear as Americans. We must be wholly intolerant of those who seek to pervert our Constitution. We must not tread on our democratic values.

As part of tonight's conversation is protecting voter rights, I am reminded that the past Presidential election brought with it evidence of election hacking and cries of illegal voting.

For the first time in the history of this Nation, we are seeing a President who is intolerably obsessed with his failure to receive the popular vote.

Many of the families that I hear from find this obsession unbefitting of a student council president in Kankakee, where I represent, let alone the President of the United States.

Without evidence, President Trump continues to claim that 3 million illegal votes in California and New York cost him the popular vote. Three million people, the number by which Hillary Clinton won the popular vote. I hardly find that to be a coincidence.

Mr. Speaker, the election is over. The bunting and ribbons have been cleaned up. It is time to govern. A continued relitigation of the election based on unfounded and divisive claims of further fraud divides our Nation further.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois.

I am now going to call someone who also has a really good understanding of civil rights, voting rights in the State of Virginia, but then also the plight of immigrants and has a deep level of empathy because the other part of his State is very much a diverse State with people made up from various parts of the world.

I yield to the gentleman representing the Fourth Congressional District of Virginia, Representative DONALD MCEACHIN.

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank the gentleman as well as the gentlewoman for leading tonight's conversation about so many issues that are important to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the President's baseless executive order on immigration has hurt this country. It has hurt this country to the extent that it has made us less safe, and it has hurt this country to the extent that it goes against our values as a nation. Our Constitution says that we will not favor any religion over another, yet the President has instituted a religious test for entry in this country just 1 week after his inauguration.

Mr. Speaker, this is a travesty. This rule has inconvenienced travel back to America over the weekend for any number of permanent residents and those of all backgrounds who serve our country. I know this because it has actually impacted citizens of the Fourth Congressional District.

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Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who has been a permanent resident for 20 years. He had visited his family in Cairo and was on his way back to Virginia when he was turned around. He was actually sent to Qatar, Mr. Speaker, where he has no connections, where he has no business. He was just sent there because he was denied entry back home.

Mr. Speaker, my congressional staff worked around the clock, along with his employer, to get him back home and, thanks be to God, he is, indeed, home. But, Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable, and it cannot go on.

I can't help but think of Leviticus chapter 19, verse 34, where we are reminded, Mr. Speaker, to treat the foreigner in our midst as if he was one of our own.

Mr. Speaker, the President's order does not do this. It is an offense to all Americans. It is an offense to the Judeo-Christian ethic. Mr. Speaker, it cannot be allowed to stand, and I will work every day, along with my colleagues in the CBC and other like-minded individuals in this Congress, to reverse this order.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentleman for sharing that story about his constituent. Again, it is such a terrible and shameful time for our country, for the world to have seen that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Columbus, Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. I thank the gentleman, my classmate and colleague, Congressman VEASEY. And to my colleague, Congresswoman STACY PLASKETT, thank you for convening tonight's Special Order for the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, we are here for two topics tonight, and you will see many of us come and talk about these topics.

So to my colleagues, let me just cut my message short and say that we are here because we all witnessed, over the weekend, President Trump's latest executive order barring immigrants, refugees, and legal permanent residents from seven Muslim-majority countries. This has set off a protest across the Nation.

I was so proud that I was able to stand in my Third Congressional District with families and individuals protesting his unilateral move that is not making us safe. It flies in the face of the values and the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I am here because we had individuals in my district who were held in the New York airport, while many others weren't freed like they were. That is why I will continue to stand up to President Trump and stand with my people.

We are also here tonight to respond to another unsubstantiated but extremely dangerous claim made by President Trump. We know that last week he doubled down on his assertion that he would have “. . . won the popular vote,” Mr. Speaker, “if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.”

Obviously not satisfied with winning the Electoral College, Trump continues to focus on defending his national popular vote loss of almost 3 million votes. He now believes, without any evidence to support his claim, that 3 to 5 million people voted fraudulently in the 2016 election.

While this was par for the course for the Trump campaign, but now that he is in the White House, Mr. Speaker, he intends to make this voter fraud untruth the subject of an actual government investigation mandated by a soon-to-be executive order, wasting untold amounts of taxpayer dollars.

Well, when the Congressional Black Caucus hears people using terms like “voter fraud,” “illegally voted,” and “strengthening up voting procedures,” we read between the lines; and that is why we are here tonight to stand up against voter fraud that he is saying, because we know it is voter suppression.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentleman from Ohio, a State that knows a lot about voter suppression, also a very international State.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Ms. BASS) representing Los Angeles, one of our most international cities in the world that I

am sure was impacted very greatly by what happened at airports this weekend.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership tonight, and also Representative PLASKETT.

Let me share with you, especially Representative PLASKETT, that on my first day here 7 years ago, one of the first things that happened was a motion on the floor to further deny the right to vote for Representatives from the territories. And I have to tell you that I think, for myself, as well as the majority of people in our country, we don't realize that you only have democracy 50 percent. So I am glad that you raised it tonight, and I think it is very important that we continue to fight so that people from the territories will have the full representation of their country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the travesty that is taking place in our country, a travesty that has resulted in innocent people, students, grandparents, mothers, fathers, and children being unable to travel and enter the United States.

People are caught in a web of suspicion and hatred as a result of the recent executive order which is nothing less than a religious ban. So today, I speak for the Africans that are caught in that ban.

Let me give you an example of who has been caught up by the Muslim ban—a brilliant Stanford student, Ms. Nisrin Omer, studying anthropology. She is a graduate of Harvard who is from Sudan and has lived in this country since 1993.

She has a green card and is a legal resident who was returning to the U.S. from research in Sudan. She was detained for 5 hours and handcuffed, simply because she is from Sudan, the very same country that President Obama worked long and hard to improve relations and to move the country and the region forward.

Another example, a Somali woman and her two children detained at Dulles Airport for 18-plus hours as a result of the Muslim ban. According to reports, the children have U.S. passports, and their father was allowed to stay in the U.S., but his Somali wife would have been deported were it not for the emergency stay granted by the New York Federal judge.

Then there are refugees, mostly Somali, stuck in Kenya following the cancellation of their flight as a result of the executive order. These stranded travelers had been waiting, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, 10 to 15 years to resettle.

And I speak of seven people who are reportedly being detained at the airport in my city, Los Angeles airport. All of these situations are a result of the President's executive order which, despite the protestations from the administration, is nothing less than a Muslim ban.

I also speak of persons fleeing for their lives from Libya, who are now

stigmatized worldwide because of this ban.

Day 10 of the Trump Presidency. Heaven help us.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank Representative BASS for her commentary representing the very international city of Los Angeles, again, a city with many immigrants, with many people who have contributed to the greatness and vibrancy of that city that we know as Los Angeles. I just really do appreciate all of her input on that.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to call up to come and speak Mr. DWIGHT EVANS. Mr. EVANS, hailing from Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District, a State that also is very international, I am sure that your State was heavily impacted by the travel ban that was implemented by the Trump administration, and I believe the world needs to hear your remarks tonight, so thank you for being here tonight to speak.

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I too want to join and thank Representative VEASEY and Representative PLASKETT for this opportunity.

Tonight, I stand with my colleagues urging support of policy solutions that will ensure our communities have unfettered access to the ballot box and to call for solutions to Republican-led attempts to suppress minority voting rights across the country.

Additionally, I must state my view of the recent action taken by President Trump which I assert has reduced the national trust in our democracy.

In the short time since President Trump has taken office, he has set forth a national security plan that would require broad spending increases. He has set forth an executive order to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a replacement in place. He has seemingly put us directly at odds with Mexico, our bordering country, due to a wall that he has set forth as one of his key proposals, and then expected and even demanded that they actually pay for it.

He has ignored the facts and has declared that 3 to 5 million people allegedly voted fraudulently in the election.

And last, but certainly not least, he has set forth an executive order banning travel from Muslim countries and suspended the refugee program, an action that makes our Nation less safe.

Over the weekend, I joined with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, Representative ROBERT BRADY, and Representative BRENDAN BOYLE and spoke directly with those who were immediately impacted by this executive action.

We joined with the protesters in voicing extreme discontent over the executive order and vowed to do our part to remedy what we can only refer to as a “forced error” of global proportions. We must work collectively to tear down the ban and to be the open democracy that our Constitution allows us to be.

Just today, Acting Attorney General Sally Yates told attorneys in the Justice Department not to make legal arguments defending President Trump's order on immigration and refugees.

The actions taken by President Trump are not in the best interest of our Nation, our national security, nor are they in the best interest of our communities; that is why we must continue to move forward policy proposals that have been introduced by my colleagues to ensure equal access to the ballot box to ensure we protect the voting rights of those in our communities so that they know that their voices are being heard.

For instance, my House colleague, Representative SEWELL, introduced the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would set forth a geographical coverage formula that is based on the current conditions that include 13 States.

The bill will establish a rolling nationwide trigger that continuously moves so that only States that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting would be covered. The Voting Rights Advancement Act would set forth greater transparency in Federal elections to ensure that voters are made aware of the late-breaking changes in voter procedures and would deter discrimination from occurring and protect voters from discrimination.

Let us continue to ensure the voices of our communities are heard. My colleagues and I stand united and ready to combat these actions that run counter to the best interest of those we are elected to represent.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. And just like the city of Philadelphia, just like the city of Los Angeles, when we heard from Congresswoman BASS earlier, oftentimes the State of Texas is portrayed through popular culture as not being a very international place, but we are a very international place.

Everyone has heard of the stories how every State Legislative Session, which one has just begun a couple of weeks ago, how Black and Hispanic voters, in particular, in the State of Texas, are targeted so our voting participation numbers will decrease.

Well, someone who has been in that fight to help protect Black and Latino voters in the State of Texas to expand voting rights in the State of Texas; and not just that, again, in pop culture, our State has oftentimes been portrayed as one way, but a lot of people forget that the city of Houston is the fourth largest city in the country and one of the most international cities in the entire world, one of the largest ballots in the entire country, printed in—I forgot exactly how many languages. Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE can tell you that later.

So not only are voting rights being impacted in her district, but also I am sure that she felt the plight of many of the people who she represents who were

stuck at airports, including the Houston International Airport, by the Muslim ban that was implemented by the Trump administration.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for their continuing leadership on a very important and needed response to the actions of many, in particular, this new administration.

My time is short, so I want to thank Mr. VEASEY for his leadership on the challenge to the voter ID law and, as well, his continuing leadership on the empowerment of voters, as well to Ms. PLASKETT for ensuring and fighting for the right to vote for the Virgin Islands.

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I stand with both of them. But I come today to plead and also to enunciate what crisis we find ourselves in. The White House is in crisis. When the White House is in crisis, that means America is in crisis.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a frivolous statement that I make; it is a truthful statement because less than 72 hours ago, without the counsel of many experts, Members of Congress who are on the jurisdictional committees, without the notice and input of the Secretary of Homeland Security, an executive order was produced by one young staffer in the White House and another individual who has pushed an agenda of exclusiveness. That is not the way to run this country.

So this executive order came out, and what we find is that 67,000 refugees are stranded around the world who actually had documents, who were vetted, and, as some stories have told us, waited 10 and 12 to 13 years to be able to get in line and to be vetted to come to the United States of America. The tragedy is that some of them were, in fact, our friends from Iraq who have stood by our military personnel who had, in fact, provided them the interpretation that they needed to save their lives. In one story we heard tonight on the steps of the United States Supreme Court was a woman who finally got here with her two children. Her husband was murdered, and her father was tortured.

So, to Mr. Trump, today I think it is important as we have joined in to repeal and to rescind this unconstitutional order, it is clear that you need to read the writing on the wall. The Deputy Attorney General, duly appointed and confirmed, of the U.S. Department of Justice, the remaining individual who has power in that office, has made a very conscious decision that they cannot defend this order because it is unconstitutional. This is not a person who takes her task lightly. This is not someone who is not an officer who has not taken an oath of office. This is akin to what happened in the Nixon administration. They were willing to lose their position to stand for the Constitution.

So the Congressional Black Caucus is on the floor today with our chairman, Mr. RICHMOND, to be able to inform America that this is patently unconstitutional. It does not provide for due process. It did not provide for equal protection of the law. As well, it is a blatant attack on freedom of religion.

For those of you who need a better explanation, let me tell you what a ban on Muslims is. A ban on Muslims is one country, two countries, seven countries, and the idea of who cannot come in are Muslims—that is a ban on Muslims. It is not a ban on Christians. It is not a ban on any other faith. It is a ban on Muslims, and the White House needs to understand what an interpretation of that means.

Further, let me say, as I come to a close, please do not try to cover yourself with the announcement that was made by President Obama. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I am well aware of that announcement that he had regarding a number of countries. It was not a ban. It was to take note that those countries were in conflict and that individuals who were coming from those countries specifically needed to have a higher level of scrutiny. It was not a ban. It is well documented that the tragedies that we have had from Boston to Orlando to San Bernardino were not individuals who came through as refugees or came from those particular countries.

What are we doing here? We are blatantly violating the Constitution. When the President of the United States violates the Constitution, this body has to stand up and respond. So I would ask this body to direct the President to rescind. In the alternative, I would ask that the legislation that is being introduced call upon the President to repeal this.

In all fairness, I would appreciate if the President took it up on his own to suspend this order that is impacting so many who are being left along the highway of despair, people who are able to—if you will, people and individuals who are able to seek refuge here are now being left.

I believe that the Congressional Black Caucus—the conscience of the Congress—stands now, tonight, to seek to ban the Muslim ban, to seek to stop the suppression of voting, and to also say to the nominee for the Attorney General: Are you prepared to represent all of us and to be able to support the institution, or reinstitution, of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act?

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE for clearing up a lot of the misconceptions that are being purposely spread out there that this was something that was used by the Obama administration. It absolutely was not. It is being purposely spread on social media, and people are lying about the past and what happened. It is completely different, and I want to thank her for clearing that up.

I now yield to the gentleman from Newark, New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), who is the gentleman representing the eastern coast of New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from Fort Worth and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for heading these Special Order hours. It is an honor that I had prior to them, and I am sure that they see the importance of being able to spearhead topics that are important for today.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump's claims of widespread voter fraud are unsubstantiated. Officials in both parties have said that there is no evidence of large-scale voter fraud. A comprehensive investigation found only 31 possible cases of impersonation fraud out of 1 billion votes cast in all elections between 2000 and 2014. President Trump lost the popular vote by 2.8 million, and it looks like he is looking for an excuse.

What is worse is that President Trump's unfounded claims will encourage Republicans to double down on their assault on voting rights. There is no significant evidence of fraud, but President Trump's claims will be used as cover to suppress the vote. He is already talking about launching a major investigation into nonexistent voter fraud. The only thing that would come from such an investigation would be further restrictions on voting rights.

If President Trump wants to investigate anything, he should investigate the real voter fraud talking place—the Republican-led attempts to suppress minority votes.

The strategy of Republican legislatures in some States has been to suppress votes by instituting voter ID laws, reducing hours for early voting, and closing polling places. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, in 2016, 14 States had new voting restrictions in place for the first time in a Presidential election. This Presidential election was the first in 50 years without the full protections of the Voting Rights Act.

As a country, we should make it as easy as possible for people to exercise the right to vote. Election officials should not erode our democratic principles. They should make sure that every American citizen has an equal voice in the democratic process.

Protecting every person's right to vote is essential to a fully functioning democracy. The countless men and women who have risked their lives to defend that right knew our system of government only works when it is inclusive and fair, when it enables all voices to have a say in the future of our country.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), who represents a critical State, a State that some people think actually went a certain direction in the Presidential race because of voter suppression tactics. She represents the city of Milwaukee.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Fort Worth for yielding this time to me.

I could just tell you that it is *deja vu* all over again. When President George W. Bush lost the election in 2000, he engaged in a lengthy investigation over so-called voter fraud to deflect from the fact that he, in fact, lost the popular vote, as did President Donald Trump. These allegations of voter fraud do nothing but to continue to bankrupt the Treasury. When, as the gentleman from New Jersey just pointed out, Loyola Law School did an extensive study, they found 31 cases of voter impersonation out of 1 billion votes cast in the last 14 years. We don't have enough time for me to do the math on that, but it is *de minimis*.

I can tell you that real voter fraud is voter suppression. 2016 was the very first Presidential election in 50 years, gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, that we didn't have the full protection of voting rights in 14 States, and it showed, including in my own swing State of Wisconsin. Brand-new voting ID restrictions disproportionately suppressed African American, low-income citizens' votes.

According to a Federal Court, nearly 300,000 registered voters in Wisconsin—in my State—could not obtain the voter ID required by the imposition of these new laws. Throughout the country, we saw 868 fewer polling places. We saw these voter ID laws, and we saw just a reinvention of these painful and unjust poll taxes and remnants of poll taxes and literacy tests imposed upon African Americans.

I can tell you, if there is any voter suppression, it is voter denial in this country; and I would call for, instead of spending taxpayer dollars to find 5 million votes that President Trump claimed voted for Hillary Clinton, I would rather spend that money investigating the Russian hacks into our election.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the State of Wisconsin.

Now I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), who is my friend and colleague from another international part of the country, the Oakland Bay Area.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank Congressman VEASEY for yielding and for his tireless work to defend rights and justice. Also to Congresswoman PLASKETT, I thank the gentlewoman for continuing to speak out, to organize us, and for her stellar representation of her district.

Mr. Speaker, in his first week as President, Donald Trump advanced dangerous conspiracy theories and enacted a Muslim ban that undermines our Nation's standing in the world. These actions show that President Trump will peddle his alternative facts no matter the consequences.

□ 2015

Now, let me be clear. This approach to governance threatens our democracy

and our national security. We must resist it. For starters, we cannot allow President Trump to erode our right to vote. Access to the ballot box is the cornerstone of American democracy, yet he spent his first week in office peddling the baseless myth that 3 to 5 million voted illegally in our election.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Both Republicans and Democrats have dismissed this myth as unsubstantiated, but the President continues to insist that millions of fraudulent voters cost him the popular vote.

Let's call this what it is. This is a campaign by our highest elected official to fabricate reasons why he lost the majority of popular votes. He will use these blatant falsehoods to further undermine access to the voting booth.

Mr. Speaker, this investigation that is being proposed really is a sham. The real attack on America's elections come from Republicans who make it harder for people of color, young people, and low-income people to vote.

I include in the RECORD an editorial from The New York Times, "The Voter Fraud Fantasy."

[From The New York Times, Jan. 27, 2017]

THE VOTER FRAUD FANTASY

(By Lilli Carré)

There are varying degrees of absurdity in the fallacies President Trump peddled during his first week in the Oval Office. Perhaps the most damaging was his insistence that millions of Americans voted illegally in the election he narrowly won.

Mr. Trump first made that false claim in late November, tweeting that he would have won the popular vote "if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally." On Wednesday, he announced that he intended to launch a "major investigation" into voting fraud and suggested the outcome may justify tightening voting rules.

What once seemed like another hare-brained claim by a president with little regard for the truth must now be recognized as a real threat to American democracy. Mr. Trump is telegraphing his administration's intent to provide cover for longstanding efforts by Republicans to suppress minority voters by purging voting rolls, imposing onerous identification requirements and curtailing early voting.

"This is another attempt to undermine our democracy," said Representative Barbara Lee of California, one of the states where Mr. Trump falsely claimed results were tainted by large-scale fraud. "It's about not honoring and recognizing demographic change."

The apparent source of Mr. Trump's original claim of mass voter fraud was Gregg Phillips, a Texas man with a penchant for making wild allegations about voting fraud. Days before Mr. Trump's tweet, Mr. Phillips claimed on Twitter that he had "verified more than three million votes cast by non-citizens." State election officials across the political spectrum promptly rejected that assertion, noting that ballot box fraud in the United States is exceedingly rare.

On Friday, Mr. Trump tweeted that he was looking forward to seeing the results of an analysis of illegal votes, as promised by Mr. Phillips. Republican officials know the voter fraud claim is an indefensible lie. But few are challenging Mr. Trump or raising alarms about how severely this hurts our election system.

Voter suppression initiatives have grown increasingly common since the Supreme

Court invalidated a central provision of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, making it easier for local authorities to tweak election rules in a manner that disenfranchises particular groups of people.

Under the Obama administration, the Justice Department aggressively fought these efforts. Lawsuits filed by civil rights advocates and the Justice Department led a federal appeals court in 2013 to strike down a North Carolina voter ID law that justices concluded had been designed to target African-American voters with “surgical precision.” Litigation in a similar Texas case is now on hold, pending guidance from the new attorney general.

If Mr. Trump’s attorney general nominee, Senator Jeff Sessions, is confirmed, the Justice Department will be likely to all but abandon enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. Mr. Sessions once called it a “piece of intrusive legislation.” That would allow state and national lawmakers to impose even tighter voting requirements, harming minorities, the young and the elderly, who tend to vote Democratic.

Republicans may see these measures as a means of staying in power in the face of demographic changes. They should be ashamed of undermining the integrity of our system of government by trying to strip away a right Americans have fought for and died to secure.

Ms. LEE. If the President were serious about protecting access to the ballot, he would join members of the Congressional Black Caucus in our call for the restoration of the Voting Rights Act.

Since it was gutted in 2013, millions of minority voters have been prevented from casting their votes. Last year alone, hundreds of thousands of minority voters were disenfranchised before and on election day.

Instead of lodging investigations based on alternative facts, President Trump should be investigating the widespread efforts to disenfranchise voters, including the use of outdated voting machines, the mishandling of provisional ballots, the improper purging of voting rolls, and the widely reporting incidents of intimidation and misinformation at the polls.

These are the truth threats to our democracy. If these threats are not enough to occupy President Trump’s attention, he should turn to the widespread evidence of Russian interference in our elections. The facts are available and in need of bipartisan investigation, but President Trump has no interest in evaluating facts. He would rather focus on falsehoods.

But the President’s attacks on our democracy aren’t restricted to alternative facts. This weekend we witnessed the erosion of another American value: our proud tradition as a refuge for immigrants of every religion. The President issued an executive order banning immigrants and refugees from the United States on the basis of religion.

This outrageous executive order to shut people out from several Muslim nations runs counter to our fundamental values that we cherish as Americans. It is morally reprehensible and will only make the United States

less safe. The order has done nothing but create chaos and fear among refugees and immigrants who have been admitted or have been approved to come to the United States.

This Nation is, has been, and always will be a nation of immigrants and refugees. This is who we are. We don’t turn our back to those in need. And certainly, we do not do so on the basis of religion.

This is a watershed moment for our country, a moment that brings into question our moral character. Thousands of Americans took to the streets to protest the Muslim ban. Really? This is what the resistance must look like.

Tonight, many of us joined our colleagues on the steps of the Supreme Court to demand a reversal of this hateful policy. We will continue to fight every attempt to erode our values to appease ideology and radical special interests.

Our new bill, Statue of Liberty Values Act, known as the SOLVE Act, will reverse President Trump’s Muslim ban executive order and ensure that funds or fees shall not be used to implement the order. I hope everyone signs on to Congresswoman LOFGREN’s bill. The President’s order harms our families, our economy, and our national security.

Once again, this is not who we are as a nation. We are better than. We must wake up and fight because the future of our democracy is at stake.

My district is a district of immigrants. People are very afraid. We are a sanctuary district. What is taking place now is totally un-American.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, within just days of assuming office, President Donald Trump has made a number of alarmingly fictitious claims about anything from the alleged failures of the Affordable Care Act to the skyrocketing murder rate throughout the United States. President Trump has even felt it was necessary to misrepresent the number of attendees at his inauguration. However, among his most egregious “alternative facts” that he has presented to the American people is the idea that there is widespread voter fraud across the country, which is undermining the electoral process in the United States. This is unequivocally false.

In fact, numerous reports, court findings, and official government investigations over, the years have pointed to the fact that voter fraud is, in reality, extremely rare. In 2016, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which ultimately found the Texas photo ID law to be racially discriminatory, noted in its findings that there were only two convictions for in-person voter impersonation fraud out of 20 million votes cast in Texas within the last decade. In a separate case ruled in 2014, a special investigations unit for the State of Texas was found to only have identified a single conviction and one guilty plea of in-person

voter impersonation in any election in the State of Texas between 2002 and 2014. Nationally, countless Studies—including one conducted by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office—have failed to identify any evidence of widespread voter fraud. The story is the same in states all across the country.

Yet, somehow President Trump and Republicans in Congress have arrived at a separate conclusion and are using this false notion to promote regressive voter laws that seek to suppress minority voting rights all across the country. These laws are an example of your classic “solution in search of a problem,” albeit with a more sinister objective to suppress liberal leaning voters and deny select groups of voters their fundamental right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have worked tirelessly throughout our careers to ensure that every American has equal access to the polls regardless of race, income, location, or background. We will not stop at making sure that every American preserves their right to vote, even in the face of a Republican-controlled Congress and Administration. The right to vote is a fundamental pillar of our democracy, and it is counter to our principles that our nation had defended for centuries to now try and erode that right for millions of Americans. I, and countless other Americans, unequivocally reject these efforts and will forever stand united against them.

FAST START UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we are off to a fast start this year under the Trump administration. It is difficult, apparently, for some of the press to keep up with how quickly some of the things are going.

I did want to make clear something that has been completely muddled by the mainstream media. They keep wondering why they continue to lose out to news channels like FOX News and why some of the conservative news sources online do so well compared to the left-wing sources. It is because a majority of people really are seeking truth, really are seeking answers.

I realize that is not true for everywhere. The areas that Hillary Clinton won are basically relegated to the edges, the fringes of the country: around the coasts and southern valley, Chicago, Detroit, and some of those areas. It is really the fringe party.

After someone—anyone with the least amount of even a small modicum of fairness—looks at the actual executive order that Donald Trump issued, it seems eminently reasonable. When looking at it, for example, compared to orders signed by a President named Obama, a President named Carter—I couldn’t find any CNN, MSNBC, or anything like CNBC, and I could have missed that somebody did break through all the misrepresentations of those networks and actually point out,