

2009, Congress has dedicated more than \$5.1 billion for multiple rounds of TIGER funding. In FY2015 alone, the program received \$10.1 billion in applications. That's twice the total amount of funding over a 10 year period in just a single fiscal year. The process is competitive, and it allows the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to reward applicants that exceed eligibility criteria and demonstrate commitments to their projects.

By increasing these funding levels and removing the programs from the annual appropriations process, we will take the guesswork and uncertainty out of the programs. This in turn will allow communities around the country to submit funding requests for projects of national, regional, or metropolitan-area significance, including the construction and repair of roads, bridges, and tunnels, the installation of high speed internet, revitalization of drinking water infrastructure, and the construction and expansion of fixed-guideway public transportation systems, including subways, light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit (BRT).

Madam Speaker, we have talked about prioritizing a large-scale infrastructure package for years. Last Congress, Congressional Democrats unveiled a trillion-dollar plan to make these investments and create tens of thousands of jobs. However, like so many other proposals, it was rejected out of hand by the Republican Majority. We need to get serious.

Every four years, the American Society of Civil Engineers' issues a "Report Card" for America's Infrastructure. The report depicts the condition and performance of American infrastructure, assigning letter grades based on the physical condition and needed investments for improvement across 16 major infrastructure categories. The most recent report card was issued last two years ago. Among the national rankings, transit systems were rated a D— and roads were rated a D.

Dams: D.

Drinking water: D.

Inland waterways: D.

Levees: D.

We need to move this process forward. I urge my colleagues to consider my bill without delay, so that our country can begin making the investments it desperately needs.

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#### INTRODUCTION OF THE STREAMLINED AND IMPROVED METHODS AT POLLING LOCATIONS AND EARLY VOTING ACT

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**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Streamlined and Improved Methods at Polling Locations and Early Voting Act, also known as the "SIMPLE" Voting Act for short that I introduced today.

This is a scary time for voting rights. We are witnessing an assault on voting rights the likes of which our nation has not seen since the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The President has alleged during the 2016 and 2018 election cycles, without evidence, that there is widespread voter fraud in our country.

In the name of protecting Americans from supposed in-person voter fraud—a fraud that

is virtually non-existent—states have been enacting voter ID laws. The real reason for these laws, however, has been anything but election integrity. It has been about partisan politics and discrimination.

But don't take my word for it. Take the words of legislators like the then-Pennsylvania House Majority Leader who boasted in 2012 that the state's newly enacted voter ID law would allow Mitt Romney to win his state. While speaking about his legislature's accomplishments, he said, "Voter ID, which is going to allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania: done."

Or take the comments of a freshman Republican Wisconsin state representative who, while being interviewed ahead of the 2016 election, said, "And now we have photo ID, and I think photo ID is going to make a little bit of a difference as well."

Or take the word of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit which said that provisions of a voter ID law in North Carolina "target African Americans with almost surgical precision[.]" According to the court, the law imposed cures for problems that did not exist, and "thus the asserted justifications cannot and do not conceal the State's true motivation."

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. It is sacred. Yet, sadly, we have an ugly history in this nation of efforts to limit people's ability to access this constitutional right.

We need to make it easier for people to vote, not harder, and that is why I have introduced this bill today.

If enacted, the SIMPLE Voting Act would require states to allow early voting for federal elections for at least two weeks prior to election day, and to the greatest extent possible ensure that polling locations are within walking distance of a stop on a public transportation route.

It would also require that sufficient voting systems, poll workers and other election resources are provided, that wait times are fair and equitable for all voters across a state, and that no one be required to wait longer than one hour to cast a ballot at a polling place.

None of this should be controversial. This is all common sense, or at least should be, to those who want help more Americans to vote.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

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#### IN RECOGNITION OF MR. PAUL STEWART

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**HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Paul Stewart as he is inducted by the USA Hockey Association into the USA Hockey Hall of Fame.

Mr. Stewart was born and raised in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where he got his first pair of skates at age six, after borrowing his sister's figure skates too many times. He rose to playing in the National Hockey League for the Quebec Nordiques.

Transitioning from a career playing in the NHL to paving the way for American referees, Mr. Stewart became the first American to both

play and officiate in the National Hockey League. Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he officiated his first game on March 27, 1986 in his hometown rink, the Boston Garden.

Players respected him, as he had a great respect for the players. He set an example for the future of NHL officiating and a new pathway for future referees. A testament to his strength and commitment came in the middle of his career, when he beat cancer and was back officiating within a year of his diagnosis. Outside of the regular season, Mr. Stewart officiated 49 Stanley Cup playoff games and two NHL All-Star games.

In 2003, Mr. Stewart became the first American born referee to officiate 1,000 NHL regular-season games. He finished out officiating his 1,010th and final game right where it all started, at home in Boston surrounded by family and friends.

After his trailblazing career on the ice, Mr. Stewart served as an ambassador for the NHL's Hockey Fights Cancer campaign. He also went on to be the director of the Bill Stewart Foundation, raising money for inner city youth sports, and the ECAC director of officiating, now working to break down barriers for women in the NHL. Following in the family profession, his two sons, McCauley and Maxwell, are both officiating hockey.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. Paul Stewart for his trailblazing efforts that have changed the future of the sport, and who now joins his grandfather in the USA Hockey Hall of Fame. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing his hard work and dedication.

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#### RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF RETIRED MISSISSIPPI JUDGE JOHN ANDREW HATCHER, JR.

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**HON. TRENT KELLY**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of one of Mississippi's most devoted citizens and public servants, the Honorable Judge John Andrew Hatcher, Jr. Judge Hatcher, a native of Sunflower, Mississippi, is retiring after a long and distinguished career.

Upon graduation from Drew High School in 1966, Judge Hatcher continued his education at Delta State University. After graduating in 1969, he attended the University of Mississippi School of Law where he received his Juris Doctorate. This began Judge Hatcher's impeccable legal career.

Judge Hatcher began practicing law in Booneville, Mississippi, in November 1973. He also took up teaching as he taught a paralegal program at Northeast Mississippi Community College. This led to a passion advocating for public service. Judge Hatcher served as the vice chairman of the Mississippi Council on Children from 1977 to 1979, the Housing Specialist with the Governor's Office of Federal, State and Local Programs, Division of Housing Coordinator from 1978 to 1979 and the Director of Yocona Area Council of Boy Scouts of America from 1979 to 1980.

Judge Hatcher went on to serve as the county prosecutor for Prentiss County, Mississippi, from 1980 to 1995. He also served as

the city prosecutor for Baldwyn, Mississippi and the city attorney for Marietta, Mississippi, from 1991 to 2006. During this time, he also began representing Farmington, Mississippi, as the city attorney. More recently, Judge Hatcher has served as the Chancery Court Judge of the First Chancery Court District of Mississippi for eleven years.

Judge Hatcher's experiences have helped him serve in several leadership roles throughout his community. He was the president of the First Judicial District Bar Association. Along with the founding incorporator, director and secretary of Booneville-Prentiss County Parks, Inc. he currently serves as the founding incorporator, director and secretary of Brice's Crossroads National Battlefield Commission Inc. He is also the founding incorporator, director, and president of Lower Anderson Owners' Association Inc., and is also a very active member of Booneville First United Methodist Church currently on the pastor-parish relations committee.

Judge Hatcher has had the love and support of his wife of 49 years, Kathy Hatcher. He has selflessly served the people of Mississippi for more than forty years. His devotion to God, America and his fellow man will always be remembered, and I wish him and his family many years of happiness.

#### INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL STATISTICS ON DEADLY FORCE TRANSPARENCY ACT

##### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, the fact that after the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, the Eric Garner killing in Staten Island, and so many other, similar tragic events around the country, we still don't have reliable statistics about when, where and against whom law enforcement uses deadly force is shameful.

Even former FBI Director James Comey has said it is "ridiculous that [he] can't tell you how many people were shot by the police last week, last month, last year."

If we are serious about addressing excessive force, we need to know the full scope of the problem. For example, how often is deadly force used? Are minorities disproportionately the victims? Could other, non-lethal measures have been taken?

That is why today I am introducing the National Statistics on Deadly Force Transparency Act. It would require collection of this type of information. Although a provision of the 1994 Crime Bill requires the Attorney General to collect statistics on the use of excessive force, there is no enforcement mechanism and the federal government has been unable to gather data from many local police departments. Since excessive force can be difficult to define, this bill would be limited to just instances where deadly force is used.

Specifically, this legislation would require any law enforcement agency receiving federal funds to provide data to the Department of Justice on when each instance of deadly force occurred, including the race and gender of both the victim and the officer involved. It would also require an explanation as to why law enforcement felt deadly force was justified

and any non-lethal efforts that were taken before deadly force was used.

The Department of Justice would make this data publicly available but would not disclose any personally identifying information.

This is information the public should already have. The fact we don't is absurd. I urge my colleagues to fix this problem and pass the National Statistics on Deadly Force Transparency Act without delay.

#### TRIBUTE TO MAJOR VALARIE GANDY

##### HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, our men and women in uniform sacrifice to keep our nation strong and free. They are well-trained, extraordinarily capable and are some of our country's best and brightest. Among their ranks is Major Valarie Gandy, who I want to help recognize today for her service to the U.S. Army Reserve and Congress.

Major Valarie Gandy, from Sylacauga, Alabama, was selected for the Army's Congressional Fellowship Program in 2015. She served as a Defense Fellow in my office from January to December 2016. I, along with my staff, greatly benefitted from her expertise, assistance, and advisement during the year-long assignment. During that time, Major Gandy became a valuable member of my team and earned my confidence to serve as my Military Legislative Assistant.

She served as an advisor on all matters relating to defense, intelligence and veteran affairs. She researched and drafted multiple pieces of legislation introduced to Congress, including a provision on equal survivor benefits for Reserve and National Guard members in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

After her time in my office, Major Gandy became a legislative liaison for the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR) Legislative Affairs Division, where she oversaw the military personnel, civilian employee and medical portfolios.

Major Gandy facilitated my visit to the Army Reserve Center in Grand Prairie, Texas in 2018. Due to her outreach efforts and effective communication, she became a heavily relied upon resource for congressional offices. For her congressional contributions and efforts, she has been recognized by veterans and military support organizations.

Our military personnel do not shoulder the stress and sacrifice of military service alone, and Major Gandy is no exception. Her husband of 17-years, Raphael, sons, Ty and Alex, and daughter, Blayne, have stood proudly by her side, sacrificing time with their wife and mother while she fulfilled her military commitments. To them also, we offer a truly heartfelt thank you.

I proudly recognize Major Valarie Gandy's years of service to our nation.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE FRESH START ACT

##### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Fresh Start Act, a bill I introduced today.

If enacted, it would allow certain individuals who have been convicted of nonviolent offenses, paid their debt to society, and are now law-abiding members of the community to petition courts to have their nonviolent conviction expunged from their records.

A criminal record, even for a minor, non-violent offense, can pose as a barrier to employment, education and housing opportunities—the very things necessary to start one's life over.

This is not only bad for rehabilitated offenders, it is bad for their families and for the communities in which they live.

The Fresh Start Act would give nonviolent offenders a chance to start over again, a chance to become productive members of society.

The bill allows offenders to apply for expungement to the court where they were sentenced and allows the United States Attorney for that district to submit recommendations to the court. Applicants who are denied could reapply once every two years. Once seven years have elapsed since an offender has completed their sentence, expungement would be automatically granted. However, sex offenders and those who commit crimes causing a loss of over \$25,000 would not be eligible for automatic expungement.

Finally, the bill would also encourage states to pass their own expungement laws for state offenses. States that pass a substantially similar law would receive a 5 percent increase in their Byrne Justice Assistance Grant funding while those that do not would lose 5 percent of their Byrne funds.

It is one thing to convict someone of a non-violent crime. It is quite another to condemn him to a de facto life sentence for it.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT OF 2019

##### HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Democracy Restoration Act of 2019. This legislation will serve to clarify and, in some cases, expand the voting rights of people with felony convictions, the next logical step in restoring their full participation in civic life.

The United States remains one of the world's strictest nations when it comes to denying the right to vote to citizens convicted of crimes. An estimated 6.1 million citizens are ineligible to vote in federal elections due to their status as ex-offenders. More than four and a half million of these disqualified voters are not in prison, but are on probation, parole, or have completed their sentence. Due to differences in state laws and rates of criminal