

the city prosecutor for Baldwin, 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, Blayze, 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

punishment, states vary widely in the practice of disenfranchisement, demonstrating a critical federal interest for uniform standards.

Clarification of the law on restoration of ex-offender voting rights is a critical next step in criminal justice reform. In 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act into law, signaling a bipartisan awareness of the importance of enacting policies that assist in the reintegration of ex-offenders into their communities. Recent public opinion research has also shown that a significant majority of Americans favor voting rights for people on probation or parole, who are currently supervised in their communities, as well as for individuals who have completed their sentences. This legislation both captures the bipartisan spirit of the Bush administration and is consistent with evolving public opinion on rehabilitation of ex-offenders.

From a constitutional basis, the Democracy Restoration Act is a narrowly crafted effort to expand voting rights for people with felony convictions, while protecting state prerogatives to generally establish voting qualifications. The legislation would only apply to persons who are not in prison, and would only apply to federal elections. As such, our bill is fully consistent with constitutional requirements established by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions upholding federal voting rights laws.

Since the initial introduction of this legislation, the Sentencing Project reports 27 states have amended felony disenfranchisement policies in an effort to reduce their restrictiveness and expand voter eligibility. These reforms have resulted in an estimated more than 800,000 citizens regaining their voting rights. Yet, despite these reforms, the overall rate of ex-offender disenfranchisement has not abated and continues to have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Many of the state reforms still rely on lengthy waiting periods or clemency and several feature burdensome procedural hurdles that have proven difficult to navigate for persons seeking to restore their voting rights. As a result, approximately 50 percent of the entire disenfranchised population is clustered in 12 states, with Florida alone accounting for 48 percent of the post-sentence population.

Proponents of ex-offender disenfranchisement have offered few justifications for continuing the practice. In fact, the strongest empirical research suggests that prohibitions on the right to vote undermine both our voting system and the fundamental rights of people with felony convictions. A series of studies make clear that civic engagement is pivotal in the transition from incarceration and discouraging repeat offenses. Disenfranchisement laws only serve to isolate and alienate ex-offenders, creating additional obstacles in their attempt to successfully put the past behind them by fully reintegrating into society. Unfortunately that is only half the story.

The current patchwork of state laws has created widespread confusion among election officials throughout the country and served as the justification for flawed voter purges. For example, although people with misdemeanor convictions never lose the right to vote in Ohio, in 2008, 30 percent of election officials in the state responded incorrectly or expressed uncertainty about whether individuals with misdemeanor convictions could vote. A similar survey by the Nebraska ACLU in advance of the 2016 general election determined

that about half of state election officials gave out the wrong information about former felons voting rights. Given the general confusion by election officials on restoration of voting rights, many ex-offenders are hesitant to even attempt registration, depriving eligible voters of their rights. Only federal law can conclusively resolve the ambiguities in this area plaguing our voting system.

In past Congresses, voting restoration legislation has been supported by a broad coalition of groups interested in voting and civil rights, including the NAACP, ACLU, Human Rights Watch, the Brennan Center for Justice, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, among many others. This coalition has expanded to include many law enforcement groups including the American Probation and Parole Association, the Association of Paroling Authorities International, and the National Black Police Association, among others, who recognize that allowing people to vote after release from prison helps rebuild ties to the community that motivate law-abiding behavior.

The denial of voting rights by many states to ex-offenders represents a vestige from a time when suffrage was denied to whole classes of our population based on race, gender, religion, national origin and property. I believe that our nation fails not only people with felony convictions by denying them the right to vote, but the rest of our society that has struggled throughout its history to ensure that its citizenry be part of legitimate and inclusive elections. It is long overdue that these restrictions be relegated to unenlightened history.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. PAUL ELIZONDO

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Mr. Paul Elizondo, who passed away on December 27, 2018. Mr. Elizondo was a fellow San Antonio resident and public servant who dedicated his life to others. He is survived by his wife, Irene, 3 sons and 3 granddaughters. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. Elizondo studied Music Education at St. Mary's University. In 1957, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served 2 years. A skilled saxophone player, he carried an appreciation for music throughout his life. For 14 years, Mr. Elizondo taught music at the San Antonio and Edgewood Independent School Districts. He was Director of the Paul Elizondo Orchestra for 50 years. His orchestra was enjoyed by the community for many years.

Mr. Elizondo was a meaningful force for progress in our community. In 1978, Mr. Elizondo was elected to the Texas House of Representatives where he served two terms and was a member of the House Committee on State Affairs and the House Committee on Public Education. In 1982, he was first elected to the Bexar County Commissioners Court, later being elected to serve an unprecedented 10th term as Commissioner for Precinct 2, making him the longest serving member of the five-person Commissioners Court.

Mr. Elizondo was known as a no-nonsense individual whose commitment to policy was

only matched by his strong sense of humor. He led incremental health care and criminal justice programs. He was strong advocate for mental health services throughout the county. He was instrumental in major infrastructure and safety projects such as the Bexar County flood control program. Mr. Elizondo's presence in the community extended beyond the Court. Notably, he assisted in bringing critical development to the Westside of San Antonio.

To many, Mr. Elizondo was considered a mentor who dedicated over 30 years to public service. His institutional recollection of many county matters will be sorely missed. Bexar County was well served by Commissioner Paul Elizondo.

I am proud to have known this great individual. The passing of Mr. Paul Elizondo has been greatly felt throughout our community. However, I am confident that his impact will last for many years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEWBORN ACT

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 Nationally Enhancing the Wellbeing of Babies through Outreach and Research Now (NEWBORN) Act, a bill I introduced today.

In 2016, Tennessee had almost 600 children die before their first birthday, including over 120 in Shelby County. Shelby County's infant mortality rate was 9.3 per 1,000 live births, which was a 13 percent increase over 2015 and significantly higher than both Tennessee's rate of 7.4 percent and the national rate of 5.9 percent.

In the United States, our infant mortality rate is comparable to countries like Bosnia, Chile, and Cuba, and an American child is 76 percent more likely to die before their first birthday in America than in 19 other wealthy nations, including Australia, Canada, France, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Even more concerning is the racial and ethnic infant mortality disparities that continue to exist. In 2016, the rates for infant mortality was nearly double for African American infants compared to white infants in Tennessee.

This is unacceptable. That's why I am introducing the NEWBORN Act.

If enacted, the NEWBORN Act would create infant mortality-focused pilot programs in the highest-risk areas of the country.

The pilot programs would focus on addressing one or more of the top five reasons for infant mortality: birth defects, preterm birth and low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, maternal pregnancy complications, and injuries to the infant.

The NEWBORN Act would specifically encourage the development of community-specific practices to promote pre-natal care and community outreach and education.

The current infant mortality rates are tragic, but good practices can improve health and save lives.

I urge my colleagues to help pass this bill.