

He said: It is a Harry Potter and the wand moment. There is that divine light coming down from somewhere. There is music out of nowhere.

Rock on, Chase. Rock on.

PRAISING OPPORTUNITY ZONES

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on Friday, I was grateful to travel on Air Force One to Charlotte with my colleagues from South Carolina, RALPH NORMAN and WILLIAM TIMMONS, along with our colleagues from North Carolina, VIRGINIA FOXX, PATRICK MCHENRY, RICHARD HUDSON, MARK MEADOWS, MARK WALKER, TED BUDD, DAN BISHOP, and GREG MURPHY.

WIS-TV News of Columbia reported the President spoke at the North Carolina Opportunity Now Summit at Central Piedmont Community College. President Trump highlighted the impact opportunity zones have made and announced a new nationwide initiative called Opportunity Now.

"Under my administration, we work to restore the American promise of upward mobility," President Trump said. "We want everyone to get ahead and get ahead big league."

Over the weekend, everywhere I went, citizens praised President Donald Trump with victory in the impeachment hoax as acquitted, exonerated, vindicated, not guilty, innocent, empowered, esteemed, and cleared.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate President Donald Trump.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

□ 1930

HONORING MAYOR RICH PALOMBO

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, I honor Richard Palombo for an amazing 20 years of service as mayor of Upper Township in South Jersey.

Rich exemplifies leadership in his personal and his professional life.

His gentle leadership is welcome at a time, unfortunately, when we have bitter partisanship. I know firsthand of his ability after working with him for years in his capacity as mayor.

Rich listens to every side and makes informed decisions which are driven by his desire to have the best community possible, whether Republican or Democrat.

At any given time of year, 1,500 to 2,000 student-age children will be participating in sporting events at the area's sports complexes, this is thanks to the leadership of Rich Palombo. I know how proud he is, and should be, of this accomplishment.

Mayor Palombo has kept taxes and crime low without sacrificing services, and I know his community always thanks him for that.

Congratulations, Rich. I look forward to our continuing relationship. And thank you for all that you do for our great community and the communities around you.

May God always bless you, and the best of luck for the future.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE 15TH AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WEXTON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, today I rise to anchor the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour, and I thank our chairwoman, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, for her tremendous leadership in organizing this effort.

Tonight, we are marking the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment, which prohibits the Federal Government and each State from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

In the aftermath of the ratification of the 15th Amendment, well over 2,000 Black men were elected to local, State, and Federal offices, 16 of whom served in Congress. Those elected officials were able to stand up for their communities and to work for the resources and protections they needed.

Today, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus are continuing their legacy. So tonight, we have a number of Members who will speak on both the importance of the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment as well as the present dangers that exist in this body and the issues that we are continuing to address.

Today, we also received the President's budget. Every year, the President's budget shows that he does not reflect the values or the lives of the most vulnerable Americans or the success and security of hardworking families across this country.

This year, I am proud to, again, stand with my colleagues on the House Budget Committee under the guidance of Chairman JOHN YARMUTH to work to protect the programs that the President is seeking to destructively slash in his proposal.

Not only does his proposal threaten my constituents and their access to

Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act programs that protect my constituents with preexisting conditions, but it also hacks away at my State's and all of our States' dollars for affordable housing and nutrition assistance, just to name a few.

The White House proposes to cut spending by \$4.6 trillion over a decade. Medicaid will see a cut of about \$900 billion in funding. Medicare would see about \$500 billion in cuts over that same period. Funding for Federal disability programs, including Social Security Disability Insurance, would be cut \$63 billion. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, would be cut by \$182 billion over 10 years as a result of the proposed stringent work requirements proposed by this administration.

This, after they gave themselves the biggest tax cut proposal enacted by Congress in 2017, giving the top billionaires and big corporations the greatest benefit from a \$1.9 trillion tax cut.

We knew it then and it is now proving out today: those tax cuts are being balanced on the backs of everyday Americans who are depending upon this Congress to stand up and to fight for them.

So in the spirit of the 15th Amendment, we know that every voice matters regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. So today, my colleagues and I will raise both the commemoration of that important amendment as well as speak truth to power as it pertains to these horrendous budget cuts that are being proposed.

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to yield to my colleague from the great State of California. She definitely speaks for me and so many other great Americans who are looking for strong advocates here in the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), my friend.

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding.

First of all, I want to thank Congressman HORSFORD for those generous comments, but also for his leadership on so many fronts and for constantly really looking out for the most vulnerable and for those who oftentimes don't have a voice here.

I am really delighted that under the leadership of our fearless chair, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus, she asked Mr. HORSFORD to chair this Special Order tonight, because it is so important that we talk about the budget cuts, and also in the context of commemorating this anniversary, the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment.

We continue to be the conscience of the Congress, and it is so important that we not only remember our history and educate those who may have forgotten about it, but also talk about how we got to where we are today.

With these budget cuts that are going to severely, disproportionately impact the African American community, how can we not make the connection between our history and what is taking place here with this administration.

Let me just lay out a few more of the budget cuts very quickly.

I do serve on the Budget Committee with Mr. HORSFORD, and so we are going to be dealing with this for the next few weeks and really lay out how horrendous these cuts are.

I also serve on the Appropriations Committee as an appropriator.

We have to do a deep dive on this tonight, so let me just lay out a few more of these horrific cuts.

There are cuts to lifesaving medical research. We're talking about that this administration wants to cut the National Institutes of Health by \$3.3 billion and reduce the funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by \$678 million.

Education: This administration wants to impose an 8.5 percent cut on the Department of Education, which is a total cut of \$6.2 billion, which includes cuts to after-school programs, which we, of course, know are extremely important in low-income communities and in the Black community.

Infrastructure: This budget reduces the funding for the Army Corps of Engineers, which fixes our Nation's crumbling water infrastructure, by \$1.7 billion.

There are cuts to community development. It eliminates the Community Development Block Grant, making it harder for communities to address needs like safe housing, economic opportunities, and public facilities improvements.

It eliminates the HOME Program. Here we are trying to increase access to affordable housing and eliminate homelessness, yet this administration's budget presents a cut in terms of just zeroing out the HOME Program. Of course, that is going to make it harder for low-income individuals to access affordable housing programs.

It reduces rural broadband, cuts funding—this is hard to believe—for small businesses. It cuts the funding for the Small Business Administration's Entrepreneurial Development grants by \$93 million, making it harder for small businesses to grow and compete.

We can go on and on and on, but we see this budget as a budget that we know is going to hurt those who don't have a lot of money, quite frankly, and who are striving to take care of their families and to live the quality of life that they so deserve as Americans.

So we are going to fight, and we are going to make sure that this budget is dead on arrival, but we think it is important to lay out what the values are that are in this budget.

It is an immoral budget, it is unethical, it is un-American, and I hope that tonight people will really understand

they need to sound the alarm. It really is a budget that requires designating this as a state of emergency.

With regard to 150 years ago: African American men were given the right to vote with the ratification of the 15th Amendment, that was in 1870, but it was ratified, though, to ensure the freedoms outlined in the 13th and 14th Amendments.

However, the promise of the 15th Amendment—going back now and right up to today—the integral promise of the right to vote for Black Americans was blocked, totally blocked until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which I remember very well. I was in high school then.

It was just quite remarkable that in our lifetime, that the 15th Amendment still wasn't actualized. Almost a century now after, here we see still violence, racially charged State and local laws subjected Black men to the use of poll taxes and literacy tests to prevent them from voting.

Through these discriminatory tactics, we still kept fighting. These tactics attempted to stop Black Americans from voting for our rights, but we are still fighting.

It wasn't just Black men who were fighting for equality and fairness.

Black women were marching in the streets long after the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting White women the right to vote. Black women continued to face the same discrimination at the polls that Black men had faced since 1870.

What is worse, Black women faced the compounded prejudices of anti-blackness and anti-women, but they were not deterred. They, we, continued to fight for equality along with African American men.

Black women, like Mary Church Terrell, organized political organizations and participated in political meetings. Black women were involved in the U.S. political system long before they could legally cast a vote.

Ninety-five years later, after decades of pressure and activism in the midst of the civil rights movement, then in 1965 the Voting Rights Act made voting more accessible to Black men and women. Despite the protections that this law put into place, the Black vote is still suppressed.

Now we have new barriers such as gerrymandering, voter ID laws, voter purges, and the closing of polling locations in many minority communities.

Now, instead of a poll tax, communities of color, especially African American communities, are waiting in line for 7, 8, and even 10 hours to vote.

Instead of making it easier to participate in our democracy, we have States making it harder and pushing minorities out of reach.

So today, 150 years after the 15th Amendment passed, this fight for the right to vote is more important than ever.

Again, as I close, going back to these budget cuts, we have to let this admin-

istration know that there is power in the Black vote and that Black lives also do matter and that these budget cuts that we are talking about tonight, when you look at them, I am worried that they would take us back, take us way back to the days of Jim Crow and the days that we don't even want to remember.

So, Madam Speaker, to Congressman HORSFORD, this is very timely tonight. I thank the gentleman for this Special Order, because the 15th Amendment and what is taking place today are very, very connected, and we need to remind our constituents of the risks and the dangers that we face at this point in our history.

□ 1945

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from California again for her tremendous leadership and for reminding us about the history that brought us to this day, the fact that it was the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery; that it was the 14th Amendment that granted us citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to freedom; but it was the 15th Amendment, which was the last of the Reconstruction Amendments, which was designed to guarantee Black men the right to vote.

As the gentlewoman rightly noted, Black women were a significant part of that effort, despite the fact that they weren't included in those initial rights until the 19th Amendment was passed. The fact is that we have come so far and made so much progress with the Voting Rights Act and know that this body, we passed H.R. 4, but we can't get agreement with our colleagues on the other side and the colleagues in the Senate to pass the Voting Rights Act.

Fifty-five years after the initial Voting Rights Act was passed, to reauthorize that in this body shows just how much of a struggle we have, whether it is with our voting rights, whether it is with legal protections, or whether it is with the values that are reflected in the budget that we are deliberating this week that the President will submit.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much for her words of wisdom and know that, with the gentlewoman in this fight, we will continue to make progress and people will be heard.

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my colleague who serves on the Budget Committee, as well as the Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security Committee.

She has many roles in which she understands the impact of the budget, the budget proposal that has been submitted by the President, which makes tremendous cuts to vital social service and safety net programs, as well as the threat and the assault that is on the

voting rights that we are speaking about tonight.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Nevada for his great leadership and the importance of this moment tonight to honor 150 years of the passage of the 15th Amendment, our right to vote, and to be joined by my colleagues, Congresswoman LEE and Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, and we thank our chair, Congresswoman BASS.

The Congressional Black Caucus is the conscience of this Nation and always stands in the gap for the very important leadership on this issue.

Might I also thank our colleague, whom we are so blessed to have amongst us. I think the gentleman takes the title of singularly being the conscience and the heart of the Congress. That is the Honorable JOHN LEWIS, who works with us and has always been our guide as relates to the question of the Voting Rights Act.

Many of you are reminded of the fact that, as that Voting Rights Act was fought for and rejected and thought it was too dangerous to pass in the 1960s, moving up to 1965, it took the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, when JOHN LEWIS, among others, was beaten almost to death and bloodied on that bridge by horsemen from the Alabama State Police. What a bloody and horrific scene. None of us can imagine what JOHN LEWIS went through.

He has continued in his service in the United States Congress to stand steadfast with us and to remind us that it is better to do the right thing, regardless of the consequences. When I think of him and this 150th year, I am reminded of how we should stand and fight and be reminded, again, that the precious right to vote can be one that can be quick and fade in the night and be taken away in the twinkle of an eye, as has been attempted over the years.

President Johnson addressed the Nation before signing the Voting Rights Act, and said: "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men," and women, "because they are different from other men," and women.

It is important to remind the Nation of the history of African Americans, the descendants now of enslaved Africans, to remind this Congress that, for nearly 250 years, the peculiar institution of slavery fed into the Nation's booming industries and facilitated its boundless growth.

We were the economic engine of this Nation—slave, brutal labor. And as this country prospered, enslaved people were denied the fruits of their labor: no workers' compensation, no life insurance, no days off, no weekends. They were brutalized without vote, without presence, without even the dignity of being one person.

They were denied a voice in America's fledgling democracy and only began to see that change as the attempt came to make a difference by, in 1869, passing the 15th Amendment over impassioned opposition.

The 13th Amendment had been passed. As my recollection serves me, President Lincoln was not able to see the final passage of that, but that was passed—and how horrific that was—to be able to finally have slavery denied.

In 1869, the lameduck Congress passed the 15th Amendment over impassioned opposition, but, Madam Speaker, it did not last long.

In 1876, this thing call Reconstruction, the many African Americans who were in the Senate and House were stricken out because of the 1876 compromise to take the priority of the South over the rights of human beings. And then came the horrors of poll tax, literacy tests, violence, Jim Crowism, the brutality against anyone who wanted to vote.

Even when the 19th Amendment came in 1920, it was not Black women who received the right to vote. So this is a worthy honoring.

My predecessor, the Honorable Barbara Jordan, my mentor and someone who encouraged me in the position I am now in, indicated, with her leadership in 1975, she was wise enough to include the State of Texas by adding to the Voting Rights Act Mexican Americans. She said:

There are Mexican American people in the State of Texas who have been denied the right to vote, who have been impeded in their efforts to register and vote, who have not had encouragement from those election officials because they are brown people.

By adding the Mexican American population community, Texas was added to the Voting Rights Act, and, lo and behold, we have suffered even with that addition because we have had poll tax ourselves. We have had the onslaught of the voter ID bill. The purging has been enormous in the State of Texas: the moving of polls, lights being out, electricity being out, machines not working.

I recall in the 1940s, there were only 30,000 African American voters, and a small percentage of them throughout the South were registered to vote. We are back where we were.

The State of Texas, as we come up on this election, has taken away a tool that has been used for decades, and that is the right to push a straight ticket. They know that the success of the 2018 election came about through young voters and elderly voters and diverse voters who knew how to do that one vote with these long ballots, and they took away that very right.

The people could choose if they wanted to vote for one party or another. We are looking at whether or not that is violating the Voting Rights Act. It takes away a choice.

Let me conclude my remarks by indicating the importance of this legislation and, again, take some words from

President Lyndon Baines Johnson: "Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot. But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment."

Lyndon Baines Johnson didn't realize that counties and cities and States across America would find ways to stop those on the basis of race and color and some other form of discrimination. He didn't realize that his job had not ended with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and as we reauthorized it just a few years ago. He did not realize that people would still be stopped from voting, those who have been incarcerated, mostly people of color.

Today, I pay tribute to my colleague who is leading this and pay tribute to the colleagues who are bringing us to recognize the 150 years. It is good to recognize, but the fight still is maintained.

If their vote at the ballot box is going to be the change agent of this Nation so homeless persons will not still be homeless, people who are hungry will not still be hungry, small businesses that want to open their doors will not be denied because of the present leadership and administration, our vote counts, and the honor and tribute that we can give to those who were enslaved for 250 years is to use the precious right to vote.

As they do so, our colleagues on the floor of this House will pay tribute to them by passing, as well, H.R. 40, which is a commission to study reparations and proposals.

Use your vote for a reason to enhance and uplift.

Use your vote to save those who cannot speak for themselves: the hungry and those who need access to medical care.

Use your vote. That is the challenge for all of us.

Honor the 150th year by your action, by your vote, and by your commitment to this Nation.

Madam Speaker, 150 years ago this month, the 15th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified and because of that Amendment, and the Voting Rights Act it authorized and President Lyndon Johnson signed into law, I stand before you as Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, who in 2017 became the first African American woman to attain the position of Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.

Madam Speaker, I rise today not just to commemorate the landmark achievement of 150 years ago but to inform our colleagues and the nation of the need to redouble and rededicate our efforts to the work that remains to be done to protect the right of all Americans to vote free from discrimination and the injustices that prevent them from exercising this most fundamental right of citizenship.

On August 6, 1965, in the Rotunda of the Capitol and in the presence of such luminaries as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Foreman of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; Senators Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Everett Dirksen; President Johnson addressed the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act:

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.

Madam Speaker, for nearly 250 years, "the peculiar institution" of slavery fed into the nation's booming industries and facilitated its boundless growth.

Even as the country prospered, enslaved people were denied the fruits of their own labor.

They were also denied a voice in America's fledgling democracy.

This only began to change in the middle of the 19th century.

At the close of the Civil War, the nation wrangled with the future of nearly 4 million Black people who, until the adoption of the 13th Amendment, had been held captive in the South.

On the heels of the 13th Amendment, which formally ended slavery, Congress passed the 14th Amendment to guarantee Black people citizenship and equality under the law.

But suffrage was an entirely separate question.

As lawmakers mapped out plans to reunify the country, extending the right to vote was hardly a priority in the North but in the South, however, Black people were voting.

In some states—Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina—the African-American electorate outnumbered its white counterpart because in 1867, when Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts, the new laws established, among other things, conditions for the former Confederate states' return to the Union.

Perhaps the most important stipulation was that the readmitted states had to draft new constitutions that guaranteed suffrage to citizens regardless of their race.

It didn't take long for Lincoln Republicans in Congress to recognize that for Reconstruction to have a chance, African Americans would have to be able to advocate for themselves in elections.

So in 1869, the lame-duck Congress passed the 15th Amendment over impassioned position.

The amendment, which was ratified in less than a year, made it illegal to "deny" or "abridge" the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" and gave Congress the power to enforce the new law.

Soon, Black people began voting not only in the South but throughout the country.

They were elected to statewide office and were even sent to Washington to represent Americans in both houses of Congress.

That it all ended in 1876 when the Hayes-Tilden Compromise resolving the 1876 presidential election ended Reconstruction.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was critical to preventing brazen voter discrimination violations that historically left millions of African Americans disenfranchised.

In 1940, for example, there were less than 30,000 African Americans registered to vote in Texas and only about 3 percent of African Americans living in the South were registered to vote.

Poll taxes, literacy tests, and threats of violence were the major causes of these racially discriminatory results.

After passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which prohibited these discriminatory practices, registration and electoral participation steadily increased to the point that by 2012, more than 1.2 million African Americans living in Texas were registered to vote.

In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were approximately 300 African Americans in public office, including just three in Congress.

Few, if any, African Americans held elective office anywhere in the South.

Because of the Voting Rights Act, today there are more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever.

The Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Hispanic public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including more than 275 at the state or federal level, 32 of whom serve in Congress.

Native Americans, Asians and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

The crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is Section 5, which requires that states and localities with a chronic record of discrimination in voting practices secure federal approval before making any changes to voting processes.

Section 5 protects minority voting rights where voter discrimination has historically been the worst.

Since 1982, Section 5 has stopped more than 1,000 discriminatory voting changes in their tracks, including 107 discriminatory changes right here in Texas.

And it is a source of eternal pride to all of us in Houston that in pursuit of extending the full measure of citizenship to all Americans, in 1975 Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who also represented this historic 18th Congressional District of Texas, introduced, and the Congress adopted, what are now Sections 4(f)(3) and 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act, which extended the protections of Section 4(a) and Section 5 to language minorities.

During the floor debate on the 1975 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, Congresswoman Jordan explained why this reform was needed:

There are Mexican-American people in the State of Texas who have been denied the right to vote; who have been impeded in their efforts to register and vote; who have not had encouragement from those election officials because they are brown people.

So, the state of Texas, if we approve this measure, would be brought within the coverage of this Act for the first time.

When it comes to extending and protecting the precious right vote, the Lone Star State—the home state of Lyndon Johnson and Barbara Jordan—can be the leading state in the Union, one that sets the example for the nation.

But to realize that future, we must turn from and not return to the dark days of the past.

We must remain ever vigilant and oppose all schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote.

Madam Speaker, I am here today to remind the nation that the right to vote—that "powerful instrument that can break down the walls of injustice"—is facing grave threats.

The threat stems from the decision issued in June 2013 by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 193 (2013), which invalidated Section 4(b) of the VRA, and paralyzed the application of the VRA's Section 5 preclearance requirements.

According to the Supreme Court majority, the reason for striking down Section 4(b) was that "times change."

Now, the Court was right; times have changed.

But what the Court did not fully appreciate is that the positive changes it cited are due almost entirely to the existence and vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

And that is why the Voting Rights Act is still needed.

Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but did not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymieing the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did eliminate them entirely.

The Voting Rights Act is needed as much today to prevent another epidemic of voting disenfranchisement as Dr. Salk's vaccine is still needed to prevent another polio epidemic.

However, officials in some states, notably Texas and North Carolina, seemed to regard the *Shelby* decision as a green light and rushed to implement election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

My constituents remember very well the Voter ID law passed in Texas in 2011, which required every registered voter to present a valid government-issued photo ID on the day of polling in order to vote.

The Justice Department blocked the law in March of 2012, and it was Section 5 that prohibited it from going into effect.

At least it did until the *Shelby* decision, because on the very same day that *Shelby* was decided officials in Texas announced they would immediately implement the Photo ID law, and other election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

The Texas Photo ID law was challenged in federal court and thankfully, just yesterday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the decision of U.S. District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos that Texas' strict voter identification law discriminated against blacks and Hispanics and violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Madam Speaker, protecting voting rights and combating voter suppression schemes are two of the critical challenges facing our great democracy.

Without safeguards to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the polls, more injustices are likely to occur and the voices of millions silenced.

Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll

taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes.

Consider the demographic groups who lack a government issued ID:

1. African Americans: 25 percent;
 2. Asian Americans: 20 percent;
 3. Hispanic Americans: 19 percent;
 4. Young people, aged 18–24: 18 percent;
- and
5. Persons with incomes less than \$35,000: 15 percent.

And there are other ways abridging or suppressing the right to vote, including:

1. Curtailing or eliminating early voting;
2. Ending same-day registration;
3. Not counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not count;
4. Eliminating adolescent pre-registration;
5. Shortening poll hours; and
6. Lessening the standards governing voter challenges thus allowing self-proclaimed “ballot security vigilantes” like the King Street Patriots to cause trouble at the polls.

Specifically, I call for the passage of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, of which I am an original co-sponsor, which repairs the damage done to the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court’s Shelby decision.

This legislation replaces the old “static” coverage formula with a new dynamic coverage formula, or “rolling trigger,” which effectively gives the legislation nationwide reach because any state and any jurisdiction in any state potentially is subject to being covered if the requisite number of violations are found to have been committed.

Madam Speaker, before concluding there is one other point I would like to stress.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Johnson said:

Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment.

In other words, political power—and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides—comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right.

And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to both register and vote in every election, state and local as well as federal.

Because if we can register and vote, but fail to do so, we are guilty of voluntary voter suppression, the most effective method of disenfranchisement ever devised.

And in recent years, Americans have not been doing a very good job of exercising our civic responsibility to register, vote, and make their voices heard.

Madam Speaker, for millions of Americans, the right to vote made possible by the 15th Amendment and protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things.

So on this 150th anniversary of that landmark amendment, let us rededicate ourselves to honoring those who won for us this pre-

cious right by remaining vigilant and fighting against both the efforts of others to abridge or suppress the right to vote and our own apathy in exercising this sacred right.

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas for her tremendous leadership and for bringing such concise points to both the budget realities that we are faced with in this current budget proposal by the administration, as well as what is at stake with the 150th anniversary of the passage of the 15th Amendment.

The fact that so many people have worked so hard for prior generations, we now, in this generation and those Members here in this body who have been duly elected by our constituents, have a solemn responsibility to respect that Amendment and the protections that come with it.

Too many times in this body, we have had an opportunity for our colleagues on the other side to work with us in a bipartisan manner to pass the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. Fortunately, the House Democrats have moved it as part of the For the People Agenda. It is sitting on Senator MITCH MCCONNELL’s desk. We are asking them to take that bill up and to vote on it in honor of the passage of the 15th Amendment and its 150th Anniversary.

I thank the gentlewoman for bringing that perspective to the floor tonight. We are calling on all of our colleagues to work with us on this important legislation, as well as H.R. 40 and the other measures that the gentlewoman spoke about.

I thank the gentlewoman for her time tonight.

I now yield to a great leader in this body. She serves as the chair of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. She is also a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

As the chair of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, she is one of five chairs for the Congressional Black Caucus. That is a tremendous accomplishment in its own right, but it reflects the legacy on which we stand as Members of this body.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON).

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand with the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus tonight to celebrate the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which granted African American men the right to vote.

The 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits the Federal Government and each State from denying a citizen the right to vote based upon the citizen’s race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

We are still fighting for that right; although, we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of that right.

In Texas and throughout our country, we are still fighting for the right

to vote and the right to have our voices heard without ridiculous impediments and barriers that you have heard about tonight. The memories of the poll tax and jelly bean jars to be counted are still with us.

I am old enough to remember that, when I became 21, at that time, to vote, I had to pay a poll tax. So it was important to be able to just vote. But I say to young people today that we still have to fight equally as hard for our right to vote.

I have lived through the periods in American history when the fundamental right to vote has been continuously challenged for people of color, where discrimination was the law of the land and separate but equal was the norm. These rights guaranteeing the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution are sacred and continue to be protected so we may live in freedom. But the fight for freedom is daily.

The 15th Amendment is part of the Reconstruction Amendments. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery. The 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States and guaranteed all citizens equal protection under the laws. And the 15th Amendment protected the right to vote.

□ 2000

The 13th and 14th Amendments were intended to establish equal rights for former slaves, and here we are, celebrating the 150th anniversary and still being treated as if slavery is the law of the land.

Reconstruction, a period in American history that lasted more than a decade, from 1863 to 1877, was devastating for African Americans and denied us the basic freedoms promised by the Constitution. This led to mass segregation in the South.

Clearly, our young people of color today did not live through much of this, and many of us didn’t. Yet, we continue to live it every day.

Madam Speaker, you have heard remarks on the budget, and you have heard remarks that specifically single out people who are least able to look out for themselves because of segregation and racism. They are also the ones who are first to be punished.

We will not be silenced, however. We will use our right to stand for all the people who have been guaranteed the right to be full Americans until we become full Americans.

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairwoman for her strong leadership, for sharing her perspective tonight, and for reminding us about the reality of the poll tax, the literacy tests, and the grandfather clauses that were once common mechanisms used to disadvantage minority voters, particularly African American voters.

Tonight, Madam Speaker, again, we are recognizing the 150th anniversary after the ratification of the 15th Amendment. Tremendous gains were

made during that Reconstruction period, where well over 2,000 Black men were elected to local, State, and Federal office, 16 of whom served in Congress.

For instance, Hiram Rhodes Revels, the first African American Senator representing Mississippi, was elected to Congress in 1870. Senator Revels was sometimes called the 15th Amendment in flesh and blood.

Senator Revels and his colleagues were only part of the story. All told, about 2,000 African Americans held public office at some level of government during Reconstruction.

But, sadly, this happened in the face of literacy tests, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses, once the most common mechanisms used for disadvantaging minority voters.

After the end of Reconstruction, these amendments were rarely enforced for nearly 100 years after their ratification. So even despite the fact that these gains were made, they were not enforced. That is why we need to have laws that are enforced, and we need to remind this administration that they are not above the law and that they have to follow the law and enforce the law.

Black families were separated from their White counterparts and forced to use lesser facilities. They were maligned, tormented, and treated without respect. Black children were forced to attend rundown schools without the necessary books to succeed.

This rampant segregation thrived across the country until the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which struck down the inherently flawed concept of separate but equal. Sadly, we are still trying to ensure that separate-but-equal concept no longer applies.

It is 150 years on from the ratification of the Black men's right to vote, however, and we are still fighting to protect those rights in the face of voter suppression efforts across this country.

Each election cycle, untold numbers of eligible Americans are prevented from voting due to barriers in the voter registration process and restrictions on casting ballots. Just since the 2010 elections, 24 States have implemented new restrictions on voting.

Alabama now requires a photo ID to cast a ballot.

Other States, such as Ohio and Georgia, have enacted use-it-or-lose-it laws, which strike voters from registration rolls if they have not participated in an election within a prescribed period of time.

In Georgia, in 2018, 53,000 voter registrants, 70 percent of whom were Black, were unable to vote because of minor misspellings or missing hyphens on their registration forms.

That is why we must draw attention to the suppression of the Black vote on this day that we honor the ratification of the 15th Amendment. Our ancestors require it.

While today we mark the ratification of the 15th Amendment and the Black

men's right to vote as my colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE, indicated, we must also acknowledge that Black women were denied that right for nearly another 100 years.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Black women played an active role in the struggle for universal suffrage. We will be recognizing the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment this August, and it is important that we remember that Black women attended political conventions at their local churches where they planned strategies to gain the right to vote.

In the late 1800s, Black women across the country worked for churches, newspapers, secondary schools, and colleges, which gave them a larger platform to promote their ideas. They participated in political meetings and organized political societies.

In spite of their hard work, many people didn't listen to them. Black men and White women usually led civil rights organizations and set the agenda, and they often excluded Black women from their organizations and activities.

In 1896, reformers like Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and Charlotte Forten Grimke founded the National Association of Colored Women to discuss ways of attaining women's rights and women's suffrage. Their motto was: Lifting as We Climb.

In 1913, Ida B. Wells founded the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago, the Nation's first Black women's club focused specifically on suffrage. Seven years after the founding of the Alpha Suffrage Club, the 19th Amendment was ratified.

The 19th Amendment technically granted women in the United States the right vote, but Black women were excluded from those rights due to the ever-present racism still pervading every corner of society in this country at that time. It wasn't until the Voting Rights Act was passed nearly a half-century later on August 6, 1965, that Black women were officially allowed to exercise their right to vote—Madam Speaker, 1965.

Yet, Black women today are the strongest in our families. They are strong in our communities, and they are strong civically. They understand how much has been fought and has been sacrificed in order for them to have that right.

So when I talk to young people and they ask me: Why should I vote? Why does this matter? What do I have to lose?

We need to be reminded tonight that people had a lot to lose. Some lost and some gave their very life. Members like our esteemed civil rights icon JOHN LEWIS gave blood so that we would have the right to vote.

It is important for us to remember that right. That right is based on this premise that the Federal Government and each State may not deny a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

That last piece I really want to underscore because the massive incarceration that has occurred over the last few decades and the number of formerly incarcerated citizens who still to this day in some States do not have their right to vote, the 15th Amendment guarantees them that right.

As we recognize this 150th anniversary, we need to challenge policies like the one in Florida where the people of Florida decided to restore those formerly incarcerated citizens and give them the ability to vote, and then the Republicans in the legislature imposed a fee for them to be able to vote. That is not what this says under the 15th Amendment.

Those in Georgia being denied the right to vote by having their name stricken from the voting rolls, that is not what the protections under the 15th Amendment provide for.

This is something that, to me, is very alarming because it speaks to the very essence of who we are as a people and the democracy that we uphold in this institution. So, tonight, I want to commend my colleagues, the entire Congressional Black Caucus; our chairwoman, KAREN BASS; and every single Member who will stand with us to pass H.R. 4, which we have done out of this House to call on Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL and to ask him to bring that bill to a vote, for the President to sign it, to ensure that every single person's vote is protected in this country and that we end these tactics where we are intimidating people from participating in this process.

This goes to the civic engagement of this country. People should participate by registering to vote. They should participate in the Census, which is occurring this year. They should participate by making sure their voice is heard at the ballot box every election.

Madam Speaker, again, I thank my colleagues for joining me for this Special Order hour. As we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment, we remind ourselves what is at stake. As we deliberate on the President's budget tomorrow and in the coming weeks, let us be reminded of what is at stake.

I know for me and the people whom I represent in Nevada's Fourth District, my job is to never forget where I come from, what I am fighting for, or whom I am fighting for, and it is the people of my district.

I am proud that Nevada was the first State of the 28 States to ratify the 15th Amendment. We did so on March 1, 1869. We are battle born in Nevada. We come from a strong history, and one of the things that we will always do is protect the rights of our fellow citizens to have their voice heard.

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

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, this month, we mark the 150th Anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment, granting African American men the right to vote. Later this year, we will also celebrate the centennial of

the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women, and therefore African American women, the right to vote.

These important anniversaries give special meaning to Black History Month this year, reflected in the 2020 theme, “African Americans and the Vote.” This theme speaks to the long struggle on the part of Black men and women to secure their place in American democracy, through the Constitution and its guarantee of an unfettered and unabridged right to vote.

The 15th Amendment was the third and final amendment adopted in the aftermath of the Civil War. Together, the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments abolished slavery, granted citizenship to African Americans and etched the right to vote into the Constitution.

While these amendments protected and expanded the rights of African Americans, too often throughout our history these rights existed on paper only. For the first century following ratification of the 15th Amendment, racial violence, poll taxes, and other forms of voter discrimination and disenfranchisement prevented African Americans from making their voices heard at the ballot box.

Progress was slow. For every one step forward, we were often pushed two steps back. But the Civil Rights movement and, most importantly, the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 brought America closer to its promise of all Americans receiving equal protection under the law.

This struggle continues today. A century and a half after receiving the right to vote and more than 50 years after passage of the Voting Rights Act, African Americans continue to face discrimination and barriers at the ballot box. Voter purges, early voting cutbacks, strict ID requirements, and discriminatory gerrymandering of legislative districts are just some of the modern-day tactics that prevent African Americans from making their voices heard.

As we celebrate this important anniversary, may we work to fulfill the text of the 15th amendment, which said the right to vote “shall not be denied or abridged by the United

States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution.

The right to vote freely and fairly is the foundation of our democracy. And yet, 150 years ago, this great nation prohibited an entire group of citizens from voting by law. 150 years seems so long ago but at the same time so near to us now.

We know that even though, 150 years ago, our lawmakers said you cannot deny voters based on the color of their skin, that states were still allowed to functionally discriminate against African Americans. Back then it was literacy tests, when they knew the people who could not read were by and large former slaves. Poll taxes for black people. Threats of having your house burned down, being beaten, or even murdered if you dared to try and exercise your Constitutional right to vote.

These practices persisted for a long time, until the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s. The brave actions of these peaceful protesters put them directly into harms way. Many were beaten, like our colleague JOHN LEWIS, and tragically some were murdered, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Their leadership directly paved the way to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This landmark legislation finally prohibited any voting law that intentionally or not, resulted in the discrimination against racial minorities. Section 5 closely monitored states that had previously used such laws in the past, so they could not slip under the radar.

Unfortunately, Section 5 enforcement was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013. The rationale was this fight was so long ago that such monitoring was not needed anymore. I can assure you it was not that long ago to me nor anyone else who lived through it. 48 years is not even a lifetime for most Americans, and yet it was supposed to be long enough to correct nearly 400 years of op-

pression and disenfranchisement for African Americans.

Of course, the predictable has now happened because 48 years was not long enough to right the wrongs. We are seeing new voting laws that will harm people of color, the poor, and the elderly disproportionately: new photo ID requirements, registration restrictions, and even mass purging of the voter rolls. Voter suppression is happening in 2020 in the same states Section 5 watched closely from 1965 to 2013.

We have indeed come a long way from codifying voter suppression explicitly by race. We have come a long way from the physical violence that was a real threat when heading to the polls. However, we still have so far to go. It is too easy to get complacent—to think what we have won cannot be taken back. But it can be, it already was in 2013. Now we have to get back to work—protect what we have and push for what we don’t.

I rise today appreciating how far we have come in the last 150 years and remembering how far we must go in the next 150 years.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. COOPER (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. MULLIN (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and the balance of the week on account of supporting his son’s continuing recovery.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o’clock and 12 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the third and fourth quarters of 2019, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2019

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/2	11/3	Japan		146.00						146.00
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/3	11/5	Australia		999.00						999.00
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/6	11/8	New Zealand		962.91						962.91
Committee total					2,107.91						2,107.91

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.

² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON, Jan. 27, 2020.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2019

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Andy Harris, MD	9/28	10/1	Tunisia		570.03				908.93		1,478.96
	10/1	10/3	Israel		1,040.00				701.19		1,741.19
	10/3	10/6	Morocco		2,111.60				1,622.23		3,733.83