

relationship between Azerbaijan and the United States. I commend Ambassador Suleymanov's significant contribution to our legislative branch, working closely with Members of Congress to expand the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus and deepen the friendship between our nations.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF TIM P.
KEGEL

HON. GUY RESCENTIALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Mr. RESCENTIALER. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Tim P. Kegel who passed away on May 22, 2021, at the age of 63.

Tim became a licensed funeral director in 1990, working with his predecessor for 10 years before taking over the business. He established Kegel Funeral Home Inc. in 1999 and ran it for over 20 years, helping the Finleyville community and the surrounding region bury loved ones with dignity. He will always be remembered for the kindness he showed grieving families throughout the burial process.

Tim was a lifelong member of the Finleyville Volunteer Fire Department. During his 45 years with them, he served as president and fire chief. Tim could often be found behind the wheel of his pride and joy, the department's vintage fire engine. He was instrumental in sourcing this engine and brought it to Finleyville in 2000.

His work as a public servant did not stop there. Tim served as deputy coroner in Washington County, which required him to be on call 365 days a year. Oftentimes he would have to respond to disturbing scenes in the dead of night or fight through inclement weather. Despite missing holidays and losing out on weekends, Tim continued in this position for nearly 30 years.

Within his community, he held the position of president for the Finleyville Borough Council. Tim served as treasurer for both the Sons of American Legion Post 613 and the Finleyville Cemetery Company. He was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church of Finleyville. Tim's neighbors will always remember his incredible warmth and impassioned storytelling.

Madam Speaker, Tim P. Kegel led a life of service to his community. From his 45-year career as a volunteer firefighter to his incredibly important work identifying and burying the deceased, his dedication to his neighbors was clear. I have no doubt Tim's legacy will live on in Finleyville and across southwestern Pennsylvania.

URGENT NEED TO PASS LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE VOTING RIGHTS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the fierce urgency of preserving

the precious right to vote by passing H.R. 4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 1, the For The People Act. I will continue the dialogue at a future time, when I discuss the importance of passing H.R. 40, legislation which I introduced that establishes a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans.

Madam Speaker, the serious damage to the precious right to vote occasioned by the right-wing, conservative majority on the Supreme Court demands that Congress exercise its powers under Section 5 of the 15th Amendment to restore the extraordinary reach and effectiveness of Section 2 and Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. As an aside, Madam Speaker, on the objection of VRA opponents to states subject preclearance having the burden to bail themselves out, I have long said that the states that were subject to preclearance under the Voting Rights Act earned their way in, so it only fitting that they earn their way out.

Madam Speaker, June 25, 2021, marked the 8th anniversary of the Supreme Court's infamous decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), which immobilized the Department of Justice from subjecting discriminatory voting and election law changes to prior review and approval, or "preclearance." It was predicted at the time by me and other defenders of the precious right to vote that the Court's misguided and naive decision would usher in a wave of state and local initiatives intended to suppress and nullify the rights of black Americans, persons of color, young adults, and marginalized communities to exercise the most basic act in the political process: voting. As we have seen in recent months, this prediction has tragically come to pass.

Not to be content with the monument to disgrace that is the *Shelby* decision, the activist right-wing conservative majority on the Roberts Court, on July 1, 2021, issued its evil twin, the decision in *Brnovich v. DNC*, 594 U.S. ___, No. 19-1257 and 19-1258 (July 1, 2021), which engrafts on Section 2 of the Voting Rights onerous burdens that Congress never intended and explicitly legislated against to ensure that: "No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision in a manner which results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color, or language minority status."

Among these burdens, couched as "guideposts," or "suggestions" are that when reviewing claims that a facially neutral election law, policy, practice, or voting rule has a discriminator, and therefore unlawful, effect on minority citizens, courts are to consider the following matters:

1. An "ordinary burdens" or "mere inconvenience" exception;
2. Size of disparities in burdens imposed by the challenged rule;
3. Other opportunities to vote provided by a state's election system;
4. Legitimate state interests justifying the challenged voting rule; and
5. The degree to which a voting rule departs from what was standard practice when 2 was amended in 1982.

Taken together, this Supreme Court cabal is saying to racial, ethnic, and language minorities: "What's the big deal, it's only voting. Just like with bad weather, sometimes you just have grin and bear a little inconvenience."

This Supreme Court majority has simply never understood, or refuses to accept, the fundamental importance of the right to vote, free of discriminatory hurdles and obstacles.

Madam Speaker, were it not for the 24th Amendment, I venture to say that this conservative majority on the Court would subject poll taxes and literacy tests to the review standard enunciated in *Brnovich v. DNC*. Their predecessors on the Court understood this, going back at least as far as 1938, when the Supreme Court held in Chief Justice Hughes' famous Footnote 4 in *United States v. Carolite Products*, 304 U.S. 144 (1938), that government action alleged to discriminate against "discrete and insular minorities" would be subject to "strict scrutiny" by reviewing courts.

Madam Speaker, you might be asking who are these "discrete and insular minorities" about whom the Court was referring? The answer is they were and are persons "excluded from "those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect" them, racial and language minorities, and aliens, all of whom were denied the single most important tool for protecting and advancing one's interests in a democracy: the right to vote. It is useful, Madam Speaker, to recount how we arrived at this day. Madam Speaker, fifty-six years ago, in Selma, Alabama, hundreds of heroic souls risked their lives for freedom and to secure the right to vote for all Americans by their participation in marches for voting rights on "Bloody Sunday," "Turnaround Tuesday," or the final, completed march from Selma to Montgomery.

Those "foot soldiers" of Selma, brave and determined men and women, boys and girls, persons of all races and creeds, loved their country so much that they were willing to risk their lives to make it better, to bring it even closer to its founding ideals. The foot soldiers marched because they believed that all persons have dignity and the right to equal treatment under the law, and in the making of the laws, which is the fundamental essence of the right to vote. On that day, Sunday, March 7, 1965, more than 600 civil rights demonstrators, including our beloved former colleague, the late Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, were brutally attacked by state and local police at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as they marched from Selma to Montgomery in support of the right to vote.

"Bloody Sunday" was a defining moment in American history because it crystallized for the nation the necessity of enacting a strong and effective federal law to protect the right to vote of every American. No one who witnessed the violence and brutality suffered by the foot soldiers for justice who gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge will ever forget it; the images are deeply seared in the American memory and experience. 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.”

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, in 2007 there were more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever. Madam Speaker, 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.

As I indicated, 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 has protected minority voting rights where voter discrimination has historically been the worst. Between 1982 and 2006, Section 5 stopped more than 1,000 discriminatory voting changes in their tracks, including 107 discriminatory changes right here in Texas. Passed in 1965 with the extraordinary leadership of President Lyndon Johnson, the greatest legislative genius of our lifetime, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was bringing dramatic change in many states across the South. But in 1972, change was not coming fast enough or in many places in Texas. In fact, Texas, which had never elected a woman to Congress or an African American to the Texas State Senate, was not covered by Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the language minorities living in South Texas were not protected at all.

But thanks to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the tireless voter registration work performed in 1972 by Hillary Clinton in Texas, along with hundreds of others, including her future husband Bill, Barbara Jordan was elected to Congress, giving meaning to the promise of the Voting Rights Act that all citizens would at long last have the right to cast a vote for person of their community, from their community, for their community. Madam Speaker, 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—could be the leading state in the Union, one that sets the example for the nation. But to realize that future, Texas must turn from and not return to the dark days of the past.

By embracing the discriminatory Texas SB7 and the ‘Big Lie’ that the 2020 election, by all accounts adjudged the most secure and inclusive in American history, was riven by voter fraud, Texas Republicans are making the wrong choice to their eternal shame. Texans must remain ever vigilant and oppose all schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote, like the odious Texas SB7 recently passed by the Texas State Senate but killed, but not yet permanently, by the unity and courage of Democrats in the Texas State House of Representatives. Madam Speaker, I applaud the House Democrats of the Texas General Assembly for being on the front lines, fighting in opposition to Texas SB7 on the House floor and I join with them in calling upon the U.S. Senate to eliminate the filibuster and to bring to the floor for debate and vote—so Congress can pass—H.R. 1 and H.R. 4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

We must all do our part to preserve this most important heritage because it was earned with the sacrifices and the lives of our ancestors. The right to vote is a “powerful instrument that can break down the walls of injustice” and must be protected against attack from all enemies, foreign and domestic, using all the legal tools at our disposal. Madam Speaker, the right to vote and to participate meaningfully in civic and political affairs has done more to advance the cause of freedom, justice, and equality than the Second Amendment has ever done, if it has done anything at all. It is time the Congress act to protect and expand the right to vote, the only right that is preservative of every other right.

Madam Speaker, how often have we heard our friends across the aisle claim that burdening the right to vote with new restrictions and limitations are racially neutral and that their intentions must be adjudged pure because ‘after all, they’re the party of Lincoln’? This is a short horse soon carried. The Republican Party was founded in the 1850s because of its opposition to slavery that Southern Democrats like future Vice-President of the Confederate States of America Alexander Stephens boasted was the “cornerstone of America.” In 1861, after the election of Abraham Lincoln as President, the eleven slaveholding states succeeded from the Union, not to preserve their heritage, but to keep their slaves. That led to the Civil War, in which more than 600,000 persons on both sides

gave their lives and ended in the utter defeat and unconditional surrender of the Confederate Army led by its traitor general Robert E. Lee. Also, as a consequence of the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution were passed and ratified.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful that at the time when it was needed most, the Republican Party was born and committed to the extinction of slavery. It was the pro-freedom, pro-civil rights party. The Democratic Party in those nightmarish days was centered in the “Solid South,” and proudly wore the label of the pro-slavery, white supremacy party. This was not lost on the American people, and for a century Black Americans overwhelmingly self-identified with the pro-civil rights, anti-white supremacy Republican Party. Even after the national Democratic Party renounced de jure racism and ‘states rights’ at the 1948 DNC in Philadelphia, resulting in Strom Thurmond leading his fellow Dixiecrats out of the convention and his running failed bid for the presidency, Black Americans remained a core constituency of the Republican Party, while nearly all whites in the southern states were Democrats, distinguishing themselves from northern liberals by calling themselves ‘Southern Democrats’ or ‘constitutional Democrats’. All of this changed in 1964.

That was the year the Republican Party nominated Sen. Barry Goldwater for President, an active and die-hard opponent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Southern Democrats saw in Goldwater’s support for ‘states rights’ a kindred spirit and vehicle to halt the federal government’s commitment to extend the writ and guarantees of the Constitution to all persons in all regions of the country. Madam Speaker, the result of that realigning election remains with us to this day. Before the Great Depression and the election of Franklin Roosevelt, the overwhelming majority of votes cast by Black Americans were for Republican candidates.

Even in the election of 1960, the parties closely competed for the votes of Black Americans, with Republican Richard Nixon winning more than 35 percent. Fast forward to 1964. Republican Barry Goldwater was routed 486–52 in an electoral college landslide and lost 43 states; Lyndon Johnson won the popular vote by 16 million votes (61–38 percent). Goldwater won only his native state of Arizona and five Deep South states—Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. It is interesting to note that the five Southern states that voted for Goldwater swung over dramatically to support him; for example, in Mississippi, where Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt had won 97 percent of the popular vote in 1936, Goldwater won 87 percent of the vote. Lyndon Johnson would say the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would cost Democrats the South for 50 years but it was worth it.

What accounted for this change in voting allegiance, which persists to this day? The answer is simple and obvious, beginning in 1964 the Democratic Party became, and was perceived by Americans, as the party of civil rights; the Republican Party not so much. The difference now is that white supremacists have not been welcome or embraced by the national Democratic Party since 1948 and have been pariahs since 1964. But they are welcome in today’s Republican Party; in fact, one was even nominated and renominated as its standard-bearer in 2016 and 2020. We Democrats are not reluctant to remove and banish

those who bring shame and dishonor to our cause of advancing equal justice for all Americans. I challenge our friends across the aisle to stop glorifying as ‘heritage’ a history of terror, injustice, violence, and racism represented by the persons whose statues are being removed and anyone who proudly waves a Confederate flag, like the one that disgraced the Capitol when it was paraded by domestic terrorists during the January 6 insurrection and attack on American democracy.

HONORING ALCYIA BELLE AS A
28TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women’s History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation’s women. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Alycia Belle of Hollywood, California.

A compassionate leader, Alycia has selflessly devoted her time to organizations and programs that benefit the Hollywood community. She served as the Director of Development for Blessed Sacrament School, a Catholic School within the Jesuit tradition, which closed its doors in 2021 after being in operation for over a century. Prior to the school’s closure, Ms. Belle raised \$941,000 for campus improvements and more than \$3.5 million for Jesuit Education that provided scholarships to families in Hollywood. She cofounded and implemented a program called Jesuit Alumni Mass, or JAM, to engage alumni from every Jesuit Institution and give them the opportunity to connect while encouraging them to become involved with their Jesuit community in Hollywood. Alycia also positively impacted the lives of children from the Alexandria House, which offers safe housing for women and children who are in the process of moving to permanent housing. The organization holds a special place in Alycia’s heart, since she was raised by a single mother. Under Alycia’s guidance, the Blessed Sacrament community welcomed several children from the Alexandria House.

Passionate about helping people and improving lives, Ms. Belle co-founded The Urban Sanctuary, which offers a safe environment within the sacred space of the Blessed Sacrament Church’s nave, where individuals experiencing homelessness may seek guidance and rest. Alycia is also exploring sharing this model with churches that have underused space and homeless visitors.

Ms. Belle supports the Hollywood Police Activities League (PAL) and is grateful for their inspiring team-building programs and their dedication to youth. In addition to taking part in their events and encouraging families to participate in PAL’s programs, she has hosted their meetings at Blessed Sacrament Church. Alycia also enjoys volunteering for Project Angel Food.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, Alycia had the whole Parish Community online with live streaming masses within a matter of days.

She also supported moving The Urban Sanctuary outdoors and worked with the Hollywood Food Coalition to provide meals to people in need. Furthermore, Alycia supported the Hollywood YMCA in implementing a shower program for unhoused individuals.

In addition to her extraordinary work in the non-profit arena, Alycia advocates for women-owned businesses. She owns Hollywood Handy Construction, Inc., which is a certified Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE). Alycia is married to her supportive husband, Jason, and together they have four children.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional, well-respected woman of California’s 28th Congressional District, Alycia Belle.

EULOGIES FROM THE FUNERAL
MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL
FOR ANN O’CONNELL LONG

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2021

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, on Saturday July 17, 2021, I had the honor of attending the funeral service for a dear friend and remarkable woman, Ann O’Connell Long. Below are the eulogies made by her three loving children Deirdre, Maura, and Michael, as well as her great friend Suzanna Nolan. I was touched by these remarks and wish to include them in the RECORD for her beloved husband Michael Long and their family.

REMARKS BY DEIRDRE LONG ABSOLONNE

When I think of our mom, I think of faith, family, work, quiet strength, beauty, and good humor. Mom’s faith was strong, but quiet. She didn’t talk about it a lot—she simply lived it.

She grew up in Parkville with two pairs of shoes, and the support of a community that populated the rest of her life. She had happy memories of her childhood, including vacations at Indian Neck, during which, ever the planner, she would lay out her bathing suit and towel before going to bed each night. When the other children would ask what she was doing, she would explain that she was getting things ready for the morning.

She chose to stay close to her mom and attend Saint Francis School of Nursing, one step in her lifelong relationship with Saint Francis. While there, she met our dad, who became her best friend and partner of 52 years. She loved to joke that he married her for her money and she claimed at least some credit for making Mike Long a Democrat.

She stayed home with us when we were babies and, on my fifth day of first grade, she resumed work full time. Nursing was her vocation. Off she went at 7 am each day to help her family and the sick. She came home every night and put a balanced dinner on the table (a feat that now, as a working mom, I see as nothing short of miraculous). Every week for all those years, with the help of only her family, she cleaned our home top to bottom (usually while singing). She earned degrees and promotions along the way, while always making her family feel that she had plenty of time for us.

I am so fortunate that my relationship with Mom was uncomplicated. It was comfortable, joyful, and good. She was steadfast, understanding, occasionally mischievous, and always just plain fun to be with. She

really listened. And she was always open to new experiences, perspectives, and people.

She enjoyed gathering with family and friends, and I know she treasured her time with each of you. She liked design magazines, good books, cute dogs, babies, massages, making lists on index cards, and simple pleasures like sitting by the fire, in the yard, or on the beach. As everyone who has ever set foot in her home (or the home of someone she helped) knows, she made everything beautiful. True to form, she spent her final months helping all of us to be ready for this morning.

Perhaps most importantly, over all the years and through all of life’s ups and downs, she joked and laughed, early often and easily.

REMARKS BY MAURA LONG SHEEHAN

When I think of my mom, I see her smiling face with that twinkle in her eye and it makes me smile too. She was warm and loving, often laughing, and had a no-nonsense way of making things happen.

When I think back to my childhood, I remember Mom singing along to John Denver when she was cleaning the house, baking chocolate chip cookies for our Cape Cod vacations, and highlighting textbooks while studying in bed at night. It wasn’t until I was much older that I realized how impressive it was that she earned her bachelor’s degree while raising three young children and earned her master’s degree while working and raising three teenagers.

As a child, I had no idea who I was dealing with. As an adult, I realize how special she was. When I think about Mom’s life and accomplishments, it amazes me that she did it all with such generosity, gratitude, and grace.

I know many of you here felt her generosity first-hand, whether it was kind words at just the right time, a homemade loaf of Irish bread, or a helping hand with your home improvements. At some point a few years ago I realized that whenever Mom showed up for a visit, after she breezed in with a smile, always bearing gifts of some sort, she would look me in the eye and ask “what can I do to help you?” Having a mother like that was a true gift.

As for gratitude, Mom found the beauty in everything around her and she knew how to have fun. She was full of joy and always seemed to have time to relax and make new friends. She made everyone feel special and she made it look easy. Sometimes when I would call her and ask what she was doing, she would laugh, tell me she had her feet curled up on the sheepskin and that she was busy, “cultivating gratitude”. She laughed, but it worked.

Mom’s grace, and her genuine kindness, were evident her entire life. She was a gracious hostess, and she truly enjoyed entertaining small groups of friends for lunch or dinner, having all her children and grandchildren under one roof every summer on Martha’s Vineyard, and hosting extended family for tenderloin dinner (with those incredible mushrooms) each Christmas season.

Her grace, dignity, and strength were on full display this past year as she continued to warmly welcome friends and family for laughter-filled visits while quietly, through her example, preparing all of us for what was to come.

REMARKS BY MICHAEL B. LONG

When I think of Mom the first thing that comes to mind is laughter and the second is the things she taught me. I recall in particular a couple of sayings she would use and tell me that Grammy O had taught her. One is, “A place for everything and everything in its place.” the other, “If ye can’t say anything nice don’t say anything at all.”