

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING LIEUTENANT PATRICK L. RAWLINGS AS THE JUNE VETERAN OF THE MONTH FOR MICHIGAN'S 9TH DISTRICT

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable valor and dedication of Lieutenant Patrick L. Rawlings, Sr., our distinguished Veteran of the Month representing Michigan's 9th Congressional District. It is with utmost pride and respect that I highlight the extraordinary service of this true American patriot.

Lieutenant Patrick Rawlings was born and raised in Keyser, West Virginia, where he graduated high school, and later attended Potomac State College from 1961–1962. His exemplary military career began at 19 years old, when he enlisted in the United States Army. After enlisting, he began his training at Fort Knox, Kentucky and later received Artillery Advanced individual training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He continued his training, graduating with honors from the Officer Candidate School earning the esteemed rank of 2ND Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Patrick Rawlings was then assigned to the 1ST Special Forces Group in Okinawa, which came contingent with more rigorous training; including Jump School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. His dedication to excellence and unwavering courage were further demonstrated during his deployments to Vietnam, where he served as a member of A-Teams A/221 and A/213 assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group. His leadership, valor, and unwavering commitment to his comrades-in-arms earned him the admiration and respect of all who served alongside him.

Throughout his impressive military career, Lieutenant Rawlings exemplified the highest ideals of service and sacrifice, earning numerous commendations and accolades, including the Airborne qualification, SCUBA School certification, and promotion to the rank of 1ST Lieutenant. His courage under fire and unwavering commitment to his fellow service members serve as a testament to his character and dedication to duty.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest thanks to Lieutenant Patrick L. Rawlings, Sr. His life of service and sacrifice serves as a powerful reminder of the debt of gratitude we owe to those who have defended our freedoms at home and abroad.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Government Accountability Office Home Rule Act. This bill would repeal the authority of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) over the District of Columbia.

GAO, a federal agency that conducts investigations and audits for Congress, has the same authority over D.C. that it has over federal agencies. GAO's authorizing statute defines D.C. as a federal agency. In addition, GAO's authorizing statute and the D.C. Home Rule Act require GAO to engage in specific types of oversight of D.C.

D.C. is not a federal agency, and it should never be treated as such. D.C. already has a locally appointed auditor and inspector general, so GAO's authority over D.C. is both redundant and offensive. GAO does not have general authority over states and cities, and therefore should not have such authority over D.C. This bill is an important step to increase home rule for D.C.

THE STATE OF VOTING RIGHTS IN AMERICA

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for hosting this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order to discuss the issue at the heart of American democracy—our right to vote.

This right is fundamental to our democracy and a threat to it is a threat to America itself.

A crucial benchmark of progress and inclusion in this country has been the passage of one of the most important pieces of legislation in our nation's history—the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Signed in to law by President Johnson, this legislation helped to reinforce America's promise of a truly democratic Nation and our 15th Amendment prohibition on denying Black Americans the right to vote.

The Voting Rights Act served as a beacon for full political participation and engagement in our nation for all Americans.

Because of that law, I stand before you as Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, the first African American woman Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, and a Senior Member on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and the Budget Committees.

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, 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.

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 approximately 60 members of Congress, the largest number ever.

Additionally, for the first time in our history, we have a Vice President, Kamala D. Harris, the first woman, first Black person and first Asian American to be sworn into that role.

Furthermore, we have the first Black woman, Ketanji Brown Jackson, serving as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many of the approximately 7,000 Hispanic public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including 56 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 2, which prohibits the implementation of voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in one of the language minority groups identified in Section 4(f)(2) of the Act.

Historically, section 5 of the Voting Rights Act provided the crucial pre-clearance formula—a vital proactive measure to determine which states and jurisdictions were required to preclear new voting laws with the Department of Justice or a Federal Court.

For nearly 50 years, section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and the preclearance formula outlined in section 4 moderated many of the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

worst abuses and resulted in many states adopting voting laws and redistricting plans with an eye to satisfying the concerns of minority voters.

Despite Section 5's long history and crucial role in ensuring our democracy was by all the people and for all the people, 11 years ago the Supreme Court made a disastrous decision that crippled the Voting Rights Act and endangered voting rights nationwide.

In its 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, the Supreme Court gutted the VRA, striking down section 4's crucial preclearance formula, rendering the proactive protections of section 5 unusable.

No longer could the Voting Rights Act take a proactive, preemptive role to stopping discriminatory legislation.

Since then, the need to protect the right to vote and safeguard our democracy has never been more urgent.

Following the *Shelby County* decision, state legislatures have targeted voters and erected deliberate barriers to the ballot box in what amounts to the most concerted effort to restrict voting access in generations. These new restrictive, discriminatory voting laws have included closing polling stations and reducing their hours, curbing early voting and vote by mail options, imposing strict ID requirements, limiting access to multi-lingual voting materials, and making more difficult to register to vote.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, at least 31 states have passed 103 restrictive voting laws since the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision in 2013 (as of May 2024). These measures disproportionately impact voters of color, Native American voters, voters with disabilities, and the elderly.

A 2018 Brennan Center report concluded that states previously covered under the preclearance formula have purged voters off their rolls at a significantly higher rate than non-covered jurisdictions now that their new laws are no longer subject to the same level of oversight.

However, threats to voting rights nationwide have not stopped there.

The Supreme Court has continued to undermine key provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

In July 2021, in its *Brnovich v. DNC* and *Arizona Republican Party v. DNC*, the Supreme Court upheld racially discriminatory voter restrictions in Arizona despite evidence that these laws were intentionally designed to target Latino and other minority voters.

In doing so, the Court further weakened the Voting Rights Act, making it harder to challenge discriminatory laws under Section 2's anti-discrimination provisions.

Yet, the threats have not stopped there.

With the 2024 election approaching, voting rights have never been more important and yet have increasingly come under fire.

Since January of 2024, at least six states have enacted seven restrictive laws.

Some states have spent the past few years piling on restrictions.

Voters in 28 states will face new restrictions that weren't in place in the last presidential election.

These include a new law in Alabama and Idaho that broadly criminalizes certain forms of assistance with absentee voting and mail ballots, limiting voting access for elderly voters, voters with disabilities, and those with limited access to transportation.

Indiana enacted a law that heightens the chances that naturalized citizens will be wrongly removed from the voting rolls.

A new law in Tennessee restricts the time frame voters have to request an absentee ballot.

A new Arizona law shortens the period during which voters may correct issues with their signatures on mail ballots.

A new West Virginia law now requires county clerks to cancel the registrations of voters who get out of state driver's licenses, creating a burden on students, military members, and others who temporarily reside outside the state but intend to return and therefore remain eligible to vote in West Virginia.

In my home state of Texas, new restrictions have been implemented on absentee voting and new legislation empowers the state to more freely purge voter rolls—a process that often results in legitimate voters unknowingly being removed and finding themselves unable to vote come November.

In the face of all these threats, what can be done to preserve voting rights?

One crucial step is the passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

This landmark legislation would restore and modernize the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In doing so, it would protect the right to vote and safeguard our democracy by preventing restrictive, discriminatory voting laws from taking effect.

It does so by establishing a new modern-day framework to determine which states and localities have a recent history of discrimination and require such jurisdictions to preclear new election changes, preventing restrictive and discriminatory voting laws from taking effect.

In other words, it revives and refreshes the preclearance formula for the modern era, enabling Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to once again preemptively prevent threats to voting rights.

It also restores Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by eliminating the heightened standard required to challenge discriminatory voting laws created by the Supreme Court in *Brnovich v. DNC*.

Voting rights should not be a partisan issue. It is the duty and responsibility of Congress to safeguard voting rights across our Nation.

Our freedom to vote is our most sacred and fundamental right.

It is the right upon which all our other rights rest, and allows us to determine the future of our communities and families, and ensure opportunities for all.

Since enactment, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been reauthorized five times with large, bipartisan majorities.

The VRA's most recent authorization occurred in 2006 when it passed unanimously in the U.S. Senate (98–0) and was signed by Republican President George W. Bush.

There is no reason that the effort to restore the VRA to its full strength should be any different.

While Republicans veered away from this bipartisan tradition last Congress, opposing the bill in the House and blocking debate in the Senate, this Congress provides a new opportunity to side with the American people and the fundamental principle that everyone has an equal opportunity to have their voice heard and vote counted.

We must reject the cynicism that Republicans at the highest level have espoused when talking about making voting more accessible for all.

Allowing every eligible vote to be cast and counted is not a “power grab.”

For democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all, no matter our background.

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore and modernize the essential portion of the Voting Rights Act that blocks discriminatory voting policies before they go into effect, creating a transparent process for protecting everyone's freedom to vote.

I have also repeatedly introduced legislation that further enshrines our voting rights.

H.R. 42—the Coretta Scott King Mid-Decade Redistricting Prohibition Act prohibits a state where the congressional districts have been redistricted after a decennial census from carrying out another redistricting until after the next apportionment of Representatives following a decennial census, unless a court requires the state to conduct a subsequent redistricting to comply with the Constitution or enforce the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

This legislation was also a response to the *Shelby County* decision, as after the 2020 census, many state legislatures redrew aggressive new measures now that they were no longer subject to preclearance.

For example, Republicans in North Carolina converted a congressional map that elected 8 Republicans and 5 Democrats into one that could elect 11 Republicans and just 3 Democrats.

The North Carolina map was skewed in a way that targets Black political power, meaning that a state that is 20 percent Black could have only a single Black member of Congress representing them.

Congressional maps in Texas, Ohio, and Georgia are also all considered severe partisan gerrymanders.

This redistricting cycle also saw unprecedented efforts to undermine the political power of Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native communities, especially in Southern states.

While redistricting after a new census is almost always a partisan process, this bill protects the redistricting process from being employed too often to skew the maps even further.

Under H.R. 42, once the first redistricting is complete after the new census, the state's maps cannot be redrawn again until the next census, unless a court mandates otherwise.

Like the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, this is another vital piece of legislation that should receive broad support from my colleagues as it enshrines voting rights nationwide and preserves the legacy of the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, for millions of Americans, the right to vote protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a 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.

Let us honor their commitment and sacrifice by enshrining the legislative protections they fought for.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDGE
STANLEY NOVACK

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Judge Stanley Novack of Stamford, Connecticut.

Judge Novack was a pillar of the Stamford community and a scion of Jurisprudence, serving 49 years on the bench across various judicial appointments in Connecticut. First elevated to the bench in 1975, Judge Novack was one of the longest presiding Connecticut Superior Court judges who had a special affinity for his time adjudicating family law cases. He handled these particularly fraught situations with a sincerity, good-humor, and empathy that regularly left litigants and lawyers grateful to have come before him to have their cases heard.

Coined “the father of family law in Connecticut” by his colleagues at a celebration of his 40th year on the bench, Judge Novack was the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Fairfield County Bar Association.

Beyond his laudatory judicial career, Judge Novack was known to be a truly remarkable human to his colleagues and family. He was famous for his uncanny ability to remember the birthdays of his fellow judges, the lawyers who argued before him, and the legal secretaries who transcribed his notes—and even their children. Alongside his wife of over thirty years, Muriel, Judge Novack never missed one of his granddaughters’ ballet recitals, theater performances, or academic graduations. And, in keeping with his devotion to our great state, he was an avid fan of the UCONN Men and Women’s basketball teams, excitedly welcoming each of his alma matter’s national championship victories.

Judge Novack’s life stands as a testament to his dedication to public service and commitment to his community. His legacy, both in the form of the case law he created and the wonderful family he leaves behind, will serve as a tribute to his many years of hard work. I thank Judge Novack for all that he did for Connecticut.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOSEPH
L. LEVESQUE, C.M.

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life of Reverend Joseph L. Levesque, C.M. A faithful priest, visionary leader, and beloved community member. Father Levesque was a true pillar of our community. His unwavering commitment to service changed the lives of all whom he knew.

A native of North Tarrytown, NY, Father Levesque entered the Congregation of the Mission after finishing high school. He completed his studies at Mary Immaculate Seminary in 1967 and became an ordained Vincentian priest. Afterwards, Father Levesque taught religious studies at St. John’s Preparatory School, St. Joseph’s Seminary, and Niagara University before pursuing his Doctoral Degree in theology at Catholic University of America.

In 1978, Father Levesque returned to Niagara University to continue teaching. Here, he was named the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Director of the Graduate Division.

Returning to seminary work in 1986, Father Levesque became the president of St. Joseph’s Seminary, a school where he previously taught. He was later elected provincial superior of the Eastern Province of Congregation of the Mission in 1990 and served a full nine-year term.

Father Levesque began his tenure as the 25th president of Niagara University in 2000. Holding this role for 13 years, he became the fourth longest-tenured president in the University’s history. Under his leadership, Father Levesque expanded the University’s footprint and ensured its long-term success. He led “The Promise of Niagara . . . The next 150 years” campaign, raising a record \$80 million for the university. These funds were used to build new state of the art facilities on campus and to renovate existing spaces. After Father Levesque stepped down from the presidency in 2013, the Niagara University Board of Trustees voted to confer him with the title President Emeritus.

At the culmination of his academic career, Father Levesque earned honorary degrees from Niagara University and St. John’s University, two of the three Vincentian institutions of higher education in the United States, and an honorary doctorate from Christ the King Seminary.

Beyond academia, Father Levesque remained an active member and leader in the community. He served as the board chair of both St. John’s University and Niagara University. Additionally, Father Levesque was an active member of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, a leadership organization for religious men in the United States. Through his roles as President and Liaison to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, Father Levesque gained national recognition for his work with the Catholic bishops and church authorities in Rome.

Today, we celebrate the enduring legacy of Father Joseph L. Levesque. His commitment to faith, passion for service, and unwavering leadership has changed our community for the better. Please join me in honoring Father Levesque for a lifetime of tremendous service.

HONORING THE CAREER OF
ANTHONY (TONY) ZAMPIELLO

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the long career of public service provided to the people of the San Gabriel Valley and Southern California by Anthony (Tony) Zampielo of the San Gabriel Valley Water Association and the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster.

Water policy and management is one of the most controversial, complicated, and costly issues in California. In my region there are hundreds of different water supply agencies, water treatment works, water distributors, and water users. One of the things that the varied water interests in the San Gabriel Valley agree on is the deep gratitude we have for the invaluable expertise of Tony Zampielo over the past 35 years.

Tony has been at the forefront of managing water agencies and advising policy makers on historic water rights, urban water usage, infrastructure, federal programs, and groundwater management. As the primary groundwater manager in the San Gabriel Valley, Tony has effectively administered basin levels and usage through cycles of drought and heavy storm seasons. The San Gabriel Basin would not have withstood the severe droughts of the past decade and come back at heightened levels the way it did if it were not for Tony’s leadership.

Tony has testified in Congress and provided policy advice that has been at the forefront of the water debates and legislation signed into law. He was the impetus for multiple provisions in Water Resources Development Acts that have led to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers improving groundwater recharge and dam operations in Southern California. He advocated for improved stormwater capture that led to a new Clean Water Act program for stormwater in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. He has championed water recycling that has spurred Congress to provide millions of dollars in additional Bureau of Reclamation funding to reuse wastewater and release it into spreading grounds and improve our aquifers.

Mr. Speaker, we are happy that Tony is moving on to a much-deserved retirement, but we will greatly miss the reservoir of knowledge that he has provided to water managers and policy makers. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Tony Zampielo on his retirement, and thanking him for his long career of public service to the people of Southern California.

COMMEMORATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the First Continental Congress and Young People’s Continental Congress.

The United States Congress traces its roots to the First Continental Congress, which convened in Carpenters’ Hall in 1774 and was one of the most significant events in the founding of our Nation. Colonial delegates solidified a united American identity by adopting the Declaration of Colonial Rights, which outlined their grievances with Great Britain, and the Articles of Association, which created the colonial coalition that later signed the Declaration of Independence and fought the American Revolution. After the Revolution, the Continental Congress evolved into the Congress of