

American Red Cross in 1881, modeling service and diplomacy in the presence of conflict. Her contributions were not without risk.

Let us be reminded of all the women who have yet to have their stories told, their achievements celebrated, and their voices heard. Their influence, whether truly recognized or not, will be felt, not only by their neighbors, but by future generations. Their contributions are important to the legacy of this Nation.

The importance of showcasing women's achievements, sharing our stories and teaching our history, cannot be overstated. Women's History Museum offers young girls the opportunity to see themselves in history as active agents of change. When we teach the history of women, we are teaching the history of humanity, and those stories are not simply for women, but for everyone. They are for everyone who shares the pioneering spirit that drives Americans to keep challenging limitations and working for freedom and opportunity.

When we recognize women, let us remember the challenges they have faced, the struggles we have endured, and the significance of our choice to persevere.

Progress is rarely easily won. Success is rarely freely given, but as history has illustrated time and time again, women have found ways to push forward and to pioneer better ways.

As we honor the women who come before us by remembering, I hope we will be grateful and humble to have inherited the progress of past generations. As Americans and visitors to our country visit the Nation's Capital and explore the museums, it seems fitting that they would have the opportunity to learn about the pioneering spirit of America and the stories of pioneering American women.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### FIGHTING VOTER SUPPRESSION

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. MCCLELLAN of Virginia was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the subject this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to co-anchor the CBC Special Order hour along with my distinguished colleague, the legend, JAMES CLYBURN.

For the next 60 minutes, members of the CBC have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people on vot-

ing rights, specifically fighting voter suppression, an issue of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Constitution created a government by, of, and for We the People. As a child, I often reflected on exactly what that meant. What that means is that it is a government that reflects the perspective of and, therefore, meets the needs of the people who participate. However, for most of our country's history in the beginning, only White, landowning men could vote.

That was changed in 1870 when the 15th Amendment opened the door for Black men to vote by prohibiting the Federal Government and States from denying or abridging a citizen's right to vote on the account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

During Reconstruction, formerly enslaved and free Black men voted and got elected to office. When Reconstruction ended, though, the former Confederate States passed new constitutions, including such things as literacy tests, poll taxes, and felony disenfranchisement. In the words of E. Carter Glass in the Virginia constitutional convention of 1902, he said these were intended to "eliminate the darky" as a factor in politics.

They made no bones about what they were doing.

Glass told his fellow convention delegates: "This plan of popular suffrage will eliminate the darky as a political factor in this State in less than 5 years, so that in no single county in the Commonwealth will there be the least concern felt for the complete supremacy of the White race in the affairs government."

Next to this achievement in vital consequence will be the inability of unworthy men of our own race to cheat their way into prominence."

This was the first great backlash in American history to making progress toward making the ideals of upon which our country was founded true for everyone.

Enter my own family history. My great-grandfather in Alabama around the same time had to take a literacy test in order to be able to register to vote. In this literacy test he was asked questions like: How many bubbles are in a bar of soap? And many other nonsensical questions that the person giving the literacy test could change the answer to based on who was answering the questions.

However, my great-grandfather was a community leader and teacher. He got all the questions right, and the registrar turned to his assistant and said a word I will never say other than in a direct quote: "I need more questions because this nigger got them all right."

My great-grandfather got the next set of questions right. Then he was told: You must find three White men to vouch for your character to be able to

register to vote. After much effort, he did it, and he voted in every election since.

Now, the second great backlash occurred after the efforts of men like Dr. King; our former colleague, John Lewis; and members of the Congressional Black Caucus like Mr. CLYBURN. Because of the Voting Rights Act, many of the things that my family suffered went away, like the poll tax.

Mr. Speaker, when I took my oath of office on this floor 2 years ago, I took my oath of office on my father's Bible. It was an old, tattered Bible from the 1940s. I didn't understand why he wouldn't get a new one. Often as we got to the anniversary of my father's passing I would look through his Bible. On January 5, 2021, he was on my mind as Georgia elected the first Black Senator. I opened the Bible, and an envelope fell out I had never noticed, and inside was his poll tax receipt from when he first registered to vote. Then I understood: He kept it in his Bible to remind him of the sacred right of the right to vote. He kept this Bible even when we tried to give him new ones. This was the one he used to write his sermons every Sunday.

Now, the 24th Amendment banned poll taxes like my father and my grandfather had to pay, but my mother was not able to vote until after the voting rights of 1965 passed. Now, Mr. Speaker, I tell this story because I daresay every member of the Congressional Black Caucus has a story or two or several in their family. In fact, some members of the CBC themselves have these stories, as you will probably hear.

All of this effort culminated in the Voting Rights Act that had an immediate impact on expanding the ability and the participation of Black Americans to vote until the Supreme Court gutted it in *Shelby v. Holder* because it said that Congress had not created enough of a record to show that voter suppression still existed on the basis of race.

However, just like those delegates in the 1902 Virginia convention, who, when asked: Well, when we give these literacy tests, how will we know if we don't explicitly say that it is on the basis of race?

Those delegates had an answer. They knew it would be up to the person implementing the literacy test, just like with my great-grandfather, to determine whether the questions were right or wrong and if they answered enough.

Now, Congress has failed to restore the provisions that were gutted in the Voting Rights Act, and as a result, we have seen a wave of laws across the country, particularly in the South, throwing up barriers in the way of voting. This is the latest voter suppression in the backlash to progress.

Moreover, now our President issued an executive order I believe last week, and on the floor of this body this week, we will have Jim Crow 2.0, the poll tax of 2025, the SAVE Act, the requirement

that every American citizen prove their citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, why is that a poll tax you might ask?

It is because the only documents allowed to prove your citizenship, other than a military ID, costs money. I will give you some examples. The Real ID costs about \$42. These are all numbers that I have gotten based on research in either my State or federally.

A passport costs \$130. A birth certificate from a State agency is \$12 in Virginia. A consular report of birth abroad is \$100. A certificate of citizenship is \$1,385.

Whether it was \$2.12 that my father paid in 1947 or \$1,385 that someone has to pay for a certificate of citizenship, it is a poll tax. It is illegal under our Constitution, and it is an effort at voter suppression.

Mr. Speaker, for women, we just heard as we celebrate the final day of Women's History Month, if your name is not the same today as on your birth certificate, then you need a document to show the chain of custody of your name. That is more money, that is more obstacles, that is more hoops to jump through, and that is more voter suppression. The Congressional Black Caucus will not stand silently by and watch it happen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, and I thank her so much for leading this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague from Virginia to express my disagreement with the misplaced priorities of the Republican majority. The American people have made clear that they want their elected leaders to be focused on improving the economy and lowering costs.

In this area, by any measure, the Trump administration and the Republican majorities here in Congress are off to a very poor start. Projected economic growth is down along with Americans' 401(k)'s. Inflation and expectations for inflation in the coming months are up. Last week, discussing the release of higher-than-expected inflation data, one economic analyst observed "the preliminary signs of stagflation pressures."

Now, I am old enough to remember the stagflation of the 1970s: low growth combined with high inflation. It was devastating then, and it would be devastating now. Unsurprisingly, consumer sentiment is down substantially.

Much of this economic weakness is the result of the Trump administration's reckless, indiscriminate, and nonstrategic tariffs, which are expected to raise costs for Americans trying to make ends meet.

To take one example, The Washington Post reported that the recently announced tariffs on automobiles are likely to raise prices most significantly for the most affordable cars.

The President, however, when asked over the weekend about automobile

price increases replied: "I couldn't care less."

The Secretary of the Treasury from my home State of South Carolina was doing quite well financially as a hedge fund manager doesn't think the American people care either. To quote him: "Access to cheap goods is not the essence of the American Dream."

□ 2000

Clearly, Mr. Trump and Mr. Bessent have never struggled to make ends meet from paycheck to paycheck and appear to view those who do with disdain.

With our Nation's economy in such a precarious state and 2 weeks of session left before a 2-week recess, is the Republican majority taking urgent action to bolster Americans' finances, boost growth, and restore confidence? Regrettably, they are not.

Instead, among other ill-advised items, they are tackling the so-called problem of noncitizens voting, which is already illegal. I say so-called problem because the Bipartisan Policy Center's analysis of The Heritage Foundation database—I repeat, a Heritage Foundation database—found just 77 instances of noncitizen voting between 1999 and 2023. That is 77 instances out of hundreds of millions of votes cast over a 25-year period.

The Bipartisan Policy Center goes on to say: "Illegal voting, including by noncitizens, is routinely investigated and prosecuted by the appropriate authorities, and there is no evidence that noncitizen voting has ever been significant enough to impact an election's outcome." That is from The Heritage Foundation.

If my Republican colleagues are truly concerned about the illegal overturning of election outcomes, they should work to prevent a repeat of the current President's attempt to overturn the 2020 election, which culminated in the deadly attack on this building on January 6, 2021. They shouldn't waste the House's time on this legislation.

Worse than a waste of time, the bill being brought to the floor this week would disenfranchise eligible citizens by imposing onerous requirements that many could not meet.

For example, as you just heard, married women who have changed their last names could not use their birth certificates with their maiden names as proof of citizenship. Neither could those born to military parents stationed abroad.

While many of my Republican colleagues may be globetrotting jet-setters, many of my constituents in South Carolina don't have passports. A \$100 passport fee is a lot of money for many people in my district—in this case, an exorbitant poll tax.

This bill is only the latest Republican attempt to erect barriers to the ballot box, following recent attempts to make it more difficult to vote by mail or by ballot drop boxes. Just last

week, the President signed a sweeping executive order with several onerous provisions that would risk disenfranchising millions of Americans.

Democratic bills, like the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act, would stop these attacks on our democracy and ensure every American is able to cast a meaningful vote.

Mr. Speaker, when the American economy is on the precipice, why are my Republican colleagues focused on making it more difficult to vote?

While I possess no special insight into their motivations, I would argue that the two are connected. Republicans don't want to face democratic accountability for their governing failures, so they are trying to curb the electoral power of the struggling Americans who their destructive economic agenda is harming the most.

I am a little bit of a student of history. What we are seeing right now evokes the dark periods of the late 1800s.

During the gilded age, low-income Black and White Americans across the South came together in pursuit of economic justice. The economic power structure responded not by expanding economic opportunities but by restricting the right to vote. The result was Jim Crow 1.0, which deprived generations of African Americans of the right to vote, the right to choose leaders who could ease their economic burdens and expand opportunities for their families.

Mr. Speaker, after these Supreme Court interpretations and these actions by these southern legislatures, let me tell you what happened in South Carolina. When more than 50 percent of the population was African American, they had zero representation here in the Congress. In fact, the last African American left Congress in 1897, and there was not another African American in this body until I took the oath of office 95 years later. That is what happened with Jim Crow 1.0, and what we are seeing happening now is Jim Crow 2.0.

I am very fond of quoting George Santayana's admonition: Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

I worry that we are dangerously close to repeating this democratic decline amidst economic disruption. However, heeding the lessons of history, I believe there is still time to prevent it.

As we fight against Republican attempts to diminish our democracy, like the bill on the floor this week, we must deploy this democracy to demand that they address the issues people actually care about. We must make our voices heard on this floor, at town-halls, over the phone, at peaceful protests, and at the ballot box.

We must make clear that Republicans must stop the Trump agenda of economic destruction. They must take action to lower costs. They must abandon their efforts to take healthcare

away from millions to fund tax cuts for billionaires.

It is early in this fight, but our initial efforts are starting to yield results. Republicans fear for their majority, and they should. It is my hope that this fear will prompt my Republican colleagues to rethink their agenda for purposes of electoral self-preservation. If they fail to do so, the American people, as has happened before, will rightfully rethink who they elect so that we can preserve our economy and our democracy.

I will close, Mr. Speaker, with a little story from the 1950s. I graduated high school in 1957. As I was about to graduate, one of my teachers assigned me an essay to write. The essay was simply to share what I wanted to do after graduation, which was 3 months away.

When I wrote the essay, she came to me several days later and told me that she had read my essay and was very disappointed in what I wrote. I thought she had problems with the style, or maybe I didn't get the subjects and verbs to agree.

When I went into her office, she said to me she was disappointed because I said in my essay that, upon graduating high school, I would be leaving my native South Carolina, and I wrote why. It was because I was a college student, and when my parents got the right to cast an effective vote—both of them college graduates—the Democratic primary in South Carolina was a private club, a White-only private club.

These were the kinds of laws that came out of the Slaughter-House Cases and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the same kind of laws that are being signaled now in the Supreme Court in the *Shelby v. Holder* decision. Just read it and you will see that what Justice Roberts wrote in that decision could have been lifted from those decisions of the 1870s. Jim Crow 2.0 is upon us.

Mr. Speaker, that bill is coming to this floor. If that bill is passed by this body, we will be taking another step toward disenfranchising people going forward.

It is a sin and a shame that this body in this year will initiate the opportunity to turn the clock back to revisit those years that we thought were gone by.

As we face this great threat to our economy and our democracy, I would hope that we will get a spine, that we will exert the authority of this body, and that we will say to anybody, in low places or high places, that we will not turn the clock back.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honorable Mr. CLYBURN for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

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Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my CBC colleagues in getting into some good trouble as we voice our very strong opposition to the Republicans' voter suppression bill, the so-called SAVE Act.

As a daughter of Selma and the Representative of Alabama's civil rights district, the fight for voting rights is very personal to me. It was in Selma 60 years ago where John Lewis and hundreds of foot soldiers were bludgeoned on the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the equal right of every American to vote. The legislation before us makes a mockery of that legacy.

Since his defeat in the 2020 election, President Donald Trump and his Republican allies have pushed the big lie of a stolen election. The majority has tried to convince the American people of the lie that noncitizens are a threat to our elections and are using that lie as an excuse to pass a new law, such as the SAVE Act, which would make it harder for millions of Americans to cast their ballots.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear: It is already illegal for noncitizens to vote in Federal elections, or in any elections. In fact, under current law, noncitizens would face up to 5 years in prison for attempting to vote in Federal elections and would even risk being deported.

In reality, this legislation would purge thousands of eligible voters from the rolls. It would create significant barriers for the 69 million women who currently are married and changed their last names so that their birth certificates do not match their marriage certificates. Thus, it would be harder for these almost 70 million women to vote.

The 140 million Americans who do not have a passport and those with military IDs and Tribal IDs, none of which would be able to prove their birth citizenship, are not included in the bill as proper forms of ID that will allow someone to show their citizenship.

Americans should see this bill for what it is: a cynical attempt to flame the fire of false voter fraud by the same extremist who brought us the January 6 insurrection.

Their objective of suppressing the vote was made even more clear last week, Mr. Speaker, when President Trump signed an executive order to erode voting rights and gave Elon Musk, an unelected, unconfirmed person, the right to access Americans' personal voter information.

Mr. Speaker, as elected officials in this House, we should be fighting to protect and expand access to the ballot box, not restrict it. As old battles have become new again, we in the Congressional Black Caucus have remained committed to ensuring and defending the sacred right to vote. This right to vote was won with blood, sweat, tears, and even deaths. We in the Congressional Black Caucus see voting rights as our North Star.

Mr. Speaker, we will not stop fighting as long as President Trump and Elon Musk and House Republicans are trying to take away our sacred right to vote.

I urge all of my colleagues to not only vote "no" on the SAVE Act, but to do so with vigor and with purpose.

It was John Lewis who said that ours is not the struggle of 1 day, 1 week, 1 year. Ours is a struggle of a lifetime. As long as the Congressional Black Caucus, 63 Members strong, is in this Congress, we will stand up and protect the right of every American to vote, and we will stop efforts like the SAVE Act.

The SAVE Act is not there to save election integrity. The SAVE Act is all about saving Republican seats and Republican elected officials. We will be voting "no" on that bill when it comes to the floor, and we urge our other colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. MCCLELLAN) for leading this Special Order hour. We in the Congressional Black Caucus stand on the shoulders of giants. It is now time for us to get off of their shoulders and to do our own work, and our own work, we will do in defeating the SAVE Act and for standing up for the legacy of John Lewis and those foot soldiers who marched on a bridge in my hometown for the equal right of every American to vote. As long as we have a voice, the CBC will be standing up for voting rights.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the honorable gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield to the honorable gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON).

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for her leadership and her stewardship. I thank the body for convening during this very special hour.

Democracy is on trial this week.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with a fervor and the burden of history on all of our backs. The question is: Do we go forward in faith, or do we go backwards in despair?

I rise tonight not just for myself as a legislator, but for all of those who never made it to this mike, for all of those who did not have the opportunity to be viewed as full human beings in our great country, for those who marched in the dust, for those who bled on the bridges, for those who faced the dogs and the batons right here in the United States of America, for those who met the fire hoses just to try to claim their right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, both of my grandfathers served in World War II. Oftentimes, when I look at Union Station, I remember that my grandfather, having fought the Nazis in World War II, coming back to the United States and into Washington, D.C., he had to leave the first-class train car as a soldier and go into the back because he was considered a Negro, a colored man. Nazi POWs went to the first-class train car as they headed back toward South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the right to vote, the crown jewel of our

democracy, is under attack again. We have seen this play out before, and we know how it ends if we don't act. Tonight, I say: We have come too far and there is too many to go back in time again.

In 1965, a year before I was born, after 346 years, African Americans were finally given full citizenship with that crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act.

I am 59 years of age. I am the first generation in my family, all born in America—all born in America—who has full equal rights. In my lifetime, at the age of 59, my children will have fewer rights than I have had. Those are troubling signs.

In 1965, the Voting Rights Act became the law of the land. It was signed in blood and baptized by the courage of men and women who dared to believe in something better. Selma gave us the foot soldiers, Montgomery gave us the movement, and the movement gave us the right to vote.

Yet, here we are in 2025, and it feels like we are back at square one. This week, the President signed an executive order requiring proof of citizenship to vote in Federal elections. He cut off mail-in ballots unless they arrive on time as he cuts the postal workforce. He says that you cannot have ballots that don't arrive on the day of.

Mr. Speaker, ignoring the rural voters, the disabled voters, the traveling soldiers and our veterans, if your State does not comply, he threatens to take away your funding. How is the President expanding democracy? He is asphyxiating our body politics.

This is not policy. This is punishment. This is not democracy. This is deception. That is suppression dressed in a suit and tie.

Don't be fooled by the language. Republicans call it election security. Jim Crow has had a way of cleaning up vile and vitriolic racist words, but I have lived long enough to know that when they say, "security," what they actually mean is "selectivity." When they say, "integrity," what they actually mean is "inequality."

Let me be clear. We don't have a voter fraud problem in this country. We have a voter suppression crisis. We have polling places shutting down in Black neighborhoods. We have long lines in indigenous communities that stretch around the corner and throughout the night. We have purges, ID laws, and maps drawn to divide rather than to unite.

Mr. Speaker, we have courts gutting the Civil Rights Act, statehouses cooking up new restrictions, and a President threatening to override the will of the people with the stroke of a pen.

Mr. Speaker, that is not justice. That is regression. That is going in reverse. We don't want to go back. We are not going back. We won't go back to a time when folks had to count jellybeans in jars to prove they were American enough.

We won't go back to a time when the color of your skin determined the

weight of your ballot or your opportunity to have a ballot in your hand. We won't go back to a time when power was hoarded by the few and denied to the many. We are marching forward with ballots, not bullets; love, not fear; and with hope, not hate.

When you suppress the vote, you suppress the American Dream. You suppress the worker, the teacher, the farm laborer, the preacher, the nurse, the single mom juggling three jobs just to make it to election day. You suppress the very soul of our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, some would say order is needed. Let me say something about order. There is no order without justice, and there is no justice when you erect barriers to silence people instead of listening to them.

We need access. We need more access, not less. We need more voices, not fewer. We need to make voting easier, not harder; more joyful, not more burdensome; and more sacred, not more cynical.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress must not wait another day. We must pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore what the Supreme Court gutted when it ripped out preclearance. We must pass the Freedom to Vote Act to guarantee that every citizen, no matter the ZIP Code that they live in, their income, or ancestry, can register, vote, and be counted with dignity.

We must defend the courts and protect the power of judges to stop injustice before it spreads and metastasizes because, if we silence the judiciary, we silence the law.

While we legislate, we must also organize. We must educate. We must inspire new generations who understand the vote not just as a right, but as a duty, as a voice, as a weapon of choice, and a peace instrument in our long fight and struggle for its freedom and total emancipation.

We must keep people marching in the streets for those who marched before us and those continuing and coming behind.

We must keep dreaming for a democracy big enough for all of us, not just for a favored few.

We must keep building the more perfect union that the Framers spoke out about but never completed.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, in the spirit of Fannie Lou Hamer and Medgar Evers—Fannie Lou Hamer said she was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I know some people are asking why we are relitigating this again.

Some people who are male and White have all of the privileges. Some people think democracy began in 1776, when only White male landowners had the right to vote. We have been a work in progress, and God is not finished with it yet.

I speak for Medgar Evers and Malcolm and Martin and for the people in line in church basements, gymnasiums, and mobile vans who believe in this country even when this country forgot about them.

They are watching as we march. History is watching us. The past is listening.

The future is haunting. The world is watching to see if America is still what it claims to be. Let us not fail the moment. Let us be worthy of the dream and our ideals. Let us not be thick on deeds and thin on action.

Let us be worthy of the dream and aspire to live up to the words of our Constitution. Let us protect the vote, not for ourselves but for all those who cannot be in this Chamber, who are counting on us to speak truth to power, pass laws, and lead with love. The vote is power. The vote is our voice.

The vote is sacred, and I will not rest until every hand that reaches for a ballot is met with a promise, not with a barrier.

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Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Virginia has 16 minutes remaining.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. CLEO FIELDS.

Mr. FIELDS. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from Virginia and the gentleman from South Carolina for organizing this Special Order at a very important time.

Before the 14th Amendment, I was considered three-fifths of a man. It was not until 1870, through the ratification of the 15th Amendment, that I received the right to vote. It wasn't until 1920, through the passage of the 19th Amendment, that women received the right to vote.

Despite all men and women having the full Federal right to vote by 1920, States still devised schemes to impose draconian restrictions to prevent voter registration for people of color.

These restrictions were Jim Crow laws. I never understood it, but in 1988, when I ran for office for the first time, I wanted my grandmother to vote for me. I was leading folk to the polls to register to vote, and I tried to get my grandmother to go. I said, "Grandmother, why in the world would you not go to vote for your grandson?" She said to me, "Sit down, son. Let me just tell you a story." She went to register to vote, and they gave her a literacy test. She had to state the preamble to the Constitution, my grandmother, in Louisiana.

I finally got her to register to vote, and she voted until she passed.

They gave them tests like citizen tests, voucher tests. They had to get other people to vouch for them. In Louisiana, we had something called all-White primaries, which meant Blacks could not even vote in primary elections.

One of the first successes we have had in the battle of voting rights was

in 1944 with the Supreme Court decision of *Smith v. Allwright* when they outlawed White-only primaries.

Following this decision, Black voter registration went up. It moved from 1,000 in 1944 to 120,000 in 1952 and 160,000 in 1956.

Despite some legal progress, Jim Crow laws were still alive and well in Southern States. Substantial progress was made through the Voting Rights Act of 1956, 1957, and 1960, which authorized the United States Attorney General to file lawsuits on behalf of Americans who were denied the right to vote and gave them the ability to investigate threats on civil rights.

A watershed moment occurred when we passed the 1964 Voting Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which made Jim Crow practices and discrimination illegal. Thank God for subsection 5. I will take a moment of personal privilege to talk about that subsection because it really affected me.

Every law that was passed in my State of Louisiana had to be precleared by the Justice Department, and then there was a challenge to that, Shelby v. Holder.

Every progress we have made, all the sacrifices all the leaders have made, like John Lewis, Martin Luther King, Shirley Chisholm, and Jesse Jackson, they kept making these pushes because they knew it was a hard time for people.

Lastly, let me just tell you, these State laws are real. Last year, I served as a member of the Louisiana State Senate, and several attempts were made to make it more difficult on a State level for people to register to vote: S. 226 dealt with absentee ballots, and it required you to put your mother's maiden name on your voter application or your vote would be thrown out. S. 218 prohibits individuals from assisting elderly people in registering to vote.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, Congress should advance legislation like the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act to increase equal access across the voting ballot.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here as I started, the great-granddaughter of Henry David Davidson, who had to take a literacy test and find three White men to vouch for him to be able to register to vote in 1902.

I stand here the daughter and granddaughter of two men named James Fennimore McClellan, who had to pay poll taxes to be able to register to vote.

I stand here the daughter of Lois McClellan, the first woman in her family who was able to vote when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed in her thirties.

I took my oath of office on the Bible in which my father kept this poll tax receipt to remind me that I owe it to them to fight for the sacred right to vote.

I stand here as the first Black woman elected to Congress from Virginia. Virginia is the birthplace of American democracy, but her labor was long and her birthing pains deep; the home of the first representative democracy in the Western Hemisphere where only White land-owning men could vote; the home, the birthplace, of American slavery; and the birthplace of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He excluded nearly half a million enslaved men and women, indeed, all the women who resided in the Thirteen Colonies, including in his beloved Monticello.

The Delegates to the Continental Congress ignored Abigail Adams' plea to "remember the ladies and be [kinder] to them than your ancestors."

Virginia is the birthplace of James Madison, who was the architect of the Virginia Plan that created a Constitution and a government by, of, and for the people in order to form a more perfect Union.

Not only did they not remember the ladies, but they considered the enslaved people who served them every day to be three-fifths of a person for purposes of this body, apportionment, and taxation, and they excluded indigenous people altogether.

Since 1789, the story of America has been one of each generation trying to make true for all Americans the promise of our founding documents. It is a story of cyclical trauma as the Civil War tore this country apart; Reconstruction sought to bind its wounds; and a violent backlash of white supremacy erased the gains made by formerly enslaved men, like my predecessor John Mercer Langston, the first Black man to serve in this body from Virginia.

It is a story of persistence, the persistence of women forcing a seat at the table of democracy and bringing a folding chair like Shirley Chisholm when they weren't let in. It is a story of the Federal Government advancing, retreating, advancing, and retreating in the battle to protect every American citizen's right to vote.

We are in the backlash right now that we have seen to that progress, and I stand here with my father's poll tax receipt behind me to remind me: We cannot go back. We cannot go back to a time when, in the name of voter integrity, barriers are put in people's way, poll taxes are put in people's way, and the requirement to pay money to prove you have the right to vote is imposed on American citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I am tired. I am tired of fighting the same fights as my parents, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents, but I fight those fights as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of the Congress, from a position of more power and strength than they ever dreamed. I fight those fights so that our children and grandchildren don't have to.

I implore this body not to take a giant step back by imposing Jim Crow 2.0 and a poll tax through the SAVE Act or the President's executive order.

The right to vote is sacred. We will defend it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRANK). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### U.S. BORROWS \$6 BILLION A DAY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. SCHWEIKERT of Arizona was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, forgive me as we get ourselves organized here. Our friends on the other side ended a little faster than we expected.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to do something a little dangerous. Have you heard the saying you should never go to bed mad? I think there should be another rule. You probably shouldn't come behind these microphones cranky, but let's have at it.

Mr. Speaker, I have been walking through numbers after numbers. For a decade now, I have come behind this microphone trying to walk through the scale of our borrowing, the scale of what is going on. The fact that most of it is driven by our demographics is giving a little bit of an excuse. Saying that makes it so it is not Democratic or Republican; it is just math. At Home, I represent the Scottsdale-Phoenix area. I am trying to figure out what is going on in our brothers and sisters on the left's heads.

I get it. They are cranky. As a former Senator that I sat next to from my State was sharing with me, one of the great frustrations of Democrats in my area is, for 15 years, they raised money and ran on marriage equality. Well, that is pretty much settled. They ran on the right to terminate pregnancies. Well, now that is in my State constitution.

What do they run on now? They run on rage, apparently.

□ 2045

I want to get this out of my head before I start to walk through some of the math. You have a country that is borrowing about \$6 billion a day, about \$70,000 a second. In a decade, there is data saying 30 percent of our tax receipts will go just to pay interest.

The wheels are coming off, and, instead, the brain trust of some of these folks—okay, I accept the tonal quality of some of the folks out of the White House isn't warm and cuddly, but do you go around neighborhoods, offices, and stick Nazi signs on their cars?

My wife drives a Tesla. We bought it a couple years ago. It is funny, at that time she got teased a bit: Oh, now you are driving an electric car. I thought you guys were really conservative.

Is this where your heads are at? Sticking Nazi things on people's windshields? There is no way they knew it