

chance to compete in Los Angeles in 2028.

Congratulations also to Kevin Kirk, Matt Carter, Ashton Swinford, and Andrea Klima who took home second- and third-place medals.

Every runner, volunteer, and supporter shows the very best of America. We are so proud of them. Bravo.

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH UNITED STEELWORKERS

(Mr. MRVAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the hard-working men and women of the United Steelworkers who have been locked out of their jobs for almost 2 months at the British Petroleum facility in Whiting, Indiana.

Since day one under the administration's Project 2025, we have seen attacks against organized labor, the gutting of the Department of Labor, and a National Labor Relations Board that only sides with corporate interests.

At the same time, an estimated \$8 billion hydrogen project at the same British Petroleum facility was canceled after the administration demanded that the tax credits be removed in the Republican reconciliation bill to offset tax cuts for the corporations and the most wealthy.

This project would have created new energy, put these union men and women on the job today, creating new economic activity and jobs for a generation. Instead, they are locked out.

Union workers also undergo specialized training to operate in this high-risk environment at a refinery. Today, the replacement workers not only put their lives at risk but everyone in my community.

I continue to call on British Petroleum to lift the lockout, to realize negotiation is not accepting the terms that created the lockout, and be able to return to good-faith negotiations and put skilled workers back on the job before a preventable tragedy occurs simply due to corporate greed.

HONORING BRAVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the brave law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving and protecting our communities.

Dedicated officers put their lives on the line every single day. Their selflessness and determination to keep us safe serve as a powerful reminder of the risk they face in the line of duty.

We remember their names and the legacy they leave behind, and their memories will forever be etched in our hearts and minds.

Let us stand united in gratitude ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten.

ANOTHER BLIGHT ON AMERICAN HISTORY

(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.)

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus to anchor this Special Order hour.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of 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, I rise on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus to address another blight on American history.

Mr. Speaker, 250 years ago, Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence "that all men were created equal and endowed by their creator with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Yet, Mr. Jefferson did not include the nearly half a million enslaved men, women, and children in the Thirteen Colonies, including at his beloved Monticello.

Eleven years later, the Constitution of the United States created a government by, of, and for we the people in order to form a more perfect Union, yet it considered the enslaved people three-fifths of a person for purposes of House of Representatives apportionment and taxation and excluded indigenous people altogether.

Since 1789, the history of our country has been one of each generation attempting to make true for all Americans the promise of American democracy embedded in our founding documents by expanding suffrage beyond White, landowning men. 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 gains made by formerly enslaved men.

In the wake of the Civil War, Congress passed the Reconstruction amendments to end slavery, guarantee equal civil, legal, and voting rights to formerly enslaved Americans, and all three granted Congress the power to enforce their provisions.

Even with these amendments, southern States resisted, resorting to organizations like the Ku Klux Klan to terrorize Black citizens for seeking to vote, run for office, and serve on juries.

Congress passed the Enforcement Acts to allow the Federal Government

to intervene. As a result, Black men gained political power across the South for the first time.

In 1870, Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi and Representative Joseph Rainey of South Carolina became the first Black Members of Congress. A total of 22 Black men served in Congress between 1870 and 1901, including John Mercer Langston, who served in Virginia's Fourth Congressional District, a seat that I now proudly serve as the first Black woman elected from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

□ 1940

The political, social, and economic power gained by Blacks across the South during Reconstruction faced a violent backlash as the KKK and other similar organizations began a reign of terror across the South. The Compromise of 1877 ended a deadlock in the Presidential election of 1876 and brought Reconstruction to an end. As a result, widespread violence, fraud, corruption, gerrymandering, malapportionment, and legislation intended to disenfranchise Black voters went unchecked for 50 years.

Then the Supreme Court issued two decisions gutting the Enforcement Acts, one which arose from the tense aftermath of a Louisiana gubernatorial election and the Colfax massacre, one of the bloodiest racial confrontations of the Reconstruction era. States wasted no time adopting measures that technically applied to all voters but were designed and enforced to disenfranchise Black voters: literacy tests like the one my great-grandfather took in 1902 in Alabama to be able to vote, poll taxes like the ones my father and my grandfather paid in Tennessee, and more restrictive residency requirements. Yet, we marched on.

Then in August of 1965, nearly 100 years after passage of the 15th Amendment, Congress passed the most effective piece of legislation to enforce its provisions: the Voting Rights Act.

As Justice Kagan wrote in her dissent in the Callais decision that put the death knell in the coffin of the Voting Rights Act by gutting what is left of it. She wrote that the Voting Rights Act was one of the most consequential and amply justified exercises of Federal legislative power in our Nation's history.

Born of the literal blood of the Union soldiers and civil rights marchers, it ushered in awe-inspiring change bringing this Nation closer to fulfilling its ideals of democracy and racial equality.

It has been repeatedly and overwhelmingly reauthorized by the people's Representatives in Congress, and only we have the right to say when it is no longer needed.

Yet just as the backlash came in response to Reconstruction beginning with *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013, the Roberts Court has systematically, from its ivory tower in Washington, gutted the Voting Rights Act.

Essentially the Court has said that the medicine for racism in our political system has worked so let's end the treatment. However, the cancer of racism has not gone away. It has been biding its time in remission, waiting for a chance to spread. Now we see in these same States that race to pass race-neutral poll taxes, literacy tests, character tests, and gerrymander maps to pack or crack Black voters to dilute their power are now moving with all deliberate speed to do the same thing again in Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, and South Carolina.

The Congressional Black Caucus will not stand idly by. As our colleague, John Lewis, said, democracy is not a state. It is an act that requires each generation to do its part to build the beloved community.

Our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, and some of our members themselves did their part to fight the obstacles put in our way of participation in this government by, of, and for the people, and we will fight tooth and nail to do the same so that our children and our grandchildren don't have to fight these fights.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE). Chairwoman YVETTE CLARKE is our fearless leader.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am Representative YVETTE D. CLARKE, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, proudly representing New York's Ninth Congressional District in central and southwest Brooklyn.

I thank my colleague, Congresswoman JENNIFER MCCLELLAN, for anchoring this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

It has been 13 days since the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, opening the door to a coordinated attack on Black political power and fair representation across the South.

Since the Callais decision came down, Republicans across the country have wasted no time in their zealous pursuit of power. They have moved with lightning speed to enact new congressional maps in Florida, Tennessee, and Missouri, and are taking aggressive action in Louisiana, Alabama, and South Carolina.

Let's be clear: This is an outright power grab, downright theft, snatching fair representation from Black voters across the South of the United States. It is about silencing Black voices, dismantling majority Black districts, and rigging the map in their favor as elections are already underway.

For years, we have sounded the alarm as the Voting Rights Act was chipped away piece by piece. Today, the consequences are here, and they are dangerous. Not since Jim Crow have we witnessed such a sweeping and deliberate effort to disenfranchise Black voters, but we are not powerless, and we are not backing down. Every inch of progress in this country has been fought for, won through struggle,

through resistance, and through the courage of people this Nation tried to leave behind.

The Voting Rights Act was not handed over freely. It was fought for, organized for, litigated for, and ultimately won through the blood and sacrifices of Black Americans and allies who demanded better from their country. As a nation, we are being called to that same courageous fight today. We owe that to the generations who came before us, the freedom fighters who faced dogs, batons, firehoses, and jail cells so that we could have a voice here in the Halls of Congress.

We owe it to the generations coming after us who deserve a country where their vote is protected, their voice is heard, and their future is not predetermined by those who fear their power.

This fight is for nothing short of the future of American democracy itself, and the CBC will meet this challenge head-on, as we have time and time again, on behalf of the communities we serve.

To anyone who thinks we will be discouraged, to anyone who believes that we will be silenced, to anyone who hopes we will sit this moment out, they are mistaken. A setback is just an opportunity for a comeback, and we have no intention of allowing Republicans to drag us backward. When November comes, we will show up in numbers too big to ignore and too powerful to suppress. That is because our history has taught us that progress is never given, it is won. It is won by ordinary people with extraordinary courage and by communities that refuse to be erased.

That is the legacy we have inherited, and that is the legacy we intend to protect. We are still here. We are still fighting, and together we will win.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for yielding.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), who picked up the baton from John Lewis.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to sound the alarm about the crisis unfolding before our eyes: the systemic dismantling of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Let me begin by thanking the gentlewoman from Virginia for leading this Special Order hour and my colleagues of the CBC for their steadfast leadership in this fight.

The Congressional Black Caucus has always stood on the front lines in defense of democracy. Tonight's Special Order hour comes at a time when that leadership is urgently needed.

For me this fight is personal. I grew up in Selma in the shadow of the civil rights movement. I represent the historic cities of Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Marion, and the Black belt. Our communities carry the scars of Bloody Sunday, the Birmingham church bombings, firehoses, police dogs, and violent resistance to the simple idea that

Black Americans deserve the full promise of citizenship.

People in my district bled for the right to vote. Some died for it. Now, six decades later, extremists are trying to drag this country backward. They are trying to erase our hard-fought progress and silence the voices of the very communities that marched, that sacrificed, and that organized to make American democracy real for everyone.

The Voting Rights Act is one of the greatest achievements in American history. It transformed this Nation. It broke the back of Jim Crow voter suppression, and it opened the doors of political participation for millions of Americans who had been locked out of democracy because of the color of their skin.

□ 1950

Over the last decade, we have watched that landmark law be chipped away, piece by piece.

In 2013, the Supreme Court's disastrous decision in *Shelby v. Holder* gutted the heart of the Voting Rights Act by striking down the preclearance formula that protected communities with a long history of racial discrimination in voting.

What happened next? Exactly what voting rights advocates warned would happen. States across the South rushed to impose restrictive voting laws. They closed polling stations, purged voter rolls, and redrew maps designed to dilute Black political power.

Now, with the Court's recent decision in *Callais*, we are witnessing yet another dangerous step backward—another attack on the principle of fair representation and equal justice under the law.

Within hours of that decision, Republican State lawmakers rushed to eliminate majority Black districts across the South, including in my home State of Alabama, where voters will now be forced to live under a map that was previously struck down for intentional discrimination against Black voters.

You guessed it: The Supreme Court just ruled that the State of Alabama can go back to a map that intentionally discriminated against Black voters.

These decisions send a dangerous message: that protections won during the civil rights movement are somehow negotiable, that the rights secured on the Edmund Pettus Bridge can be weakened, narrowed, or ignored.

I reject that. The people I represent reject that. History rejects that. We cannot allow a handful of extremists, whether on the bench or in State legislatures, to rewrite history and reverse generations of progress.

The right to vote is precious, John Lewis told us, almost sacred. Without the vote, communities lose their voice. Without the vote, power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few. Without the vote, democracy itself is in danger.

That is why we must reform and reintroduce the John R. Lewis Voting

Rights Advancement Act to restore, reform, and modernize the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Our bill would rebuild the preclearance system that was destroyed by Shelby. It would once again require jurisdictions with repeated voting rights violations to prove that changes to election laws are not discriminatory. It would be reformed to do away with partisan gerrymandering that was unleashed in the Callais case.

Let us be clear: The legislation bears the name of John Lewis because he understood better than anyone else that democracy is not self-executing. It requires courage. Democracy requires vigilance. It requires action.

Only Congress can rewrite the law so that partisan gerrymandering is no longer the law of the land. Only Congress can act to overturn what the Supreme Court did, and we must act now. If we fail to meet this moment, future generations will ask how we allowed the gains of the civil rights movement to be dismantled on our watch.

After all of this, I still believe in the promise of America. I believe in the legacy of those foot soldiers in Selma. I believe in the courage of ordinary people who refused to be pushed backward. I believe that if we stand together, organize together, and fight together, we can protect the sacred right to vote for generations to come.

I submit to you this: If your vote didn't matter, they wouldn't be working so hard to take it away.

We have to vote like our lives depend upon it because they do. We are not going back—not today, not tomorrow, not ever.

We don't want just some representation or no representation. We want fair representation. In the State of Alabama, African Americans are 28 percent of the vote. There are seven seats, and we deserve two. We want nothing less.

We will march. We will fight. We will organize. We will vote until victory is won.

Join me in Montgomery, Alabama, for the All Roads Lead to the South National Day of Action this Saturday, May 16, at 1 p.m. in Montgomery, Alabama, at the foot of the State capitol. We will stand up, stand tall, and we will fight back because, guess what. We are not—not—going back.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, tonight, you see members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the floor of the House of Representatives. If you think what you see tonight is a strong voice against an attempt to disrupt, undermine, and destroy the Voting Rights Act, you ain't seen nothing yet.

This is just the beginning of what we must do, of what we have to do. Donald Trump's war on democracy did not start with redistricting, and it certainly will not end there.

From day one, he has worked to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion

and programs all across corporate America and throughout the Federal Government, fueling layoffs, shrinking opportunity, and pushing Black and Brown Americans further out of positions of power and economic mobility.

After targeting diversity in jobs and opportunities and voices in the workplace, with the help of Republicans, this administration is now trying to eliminate representation in Congress itself.

Let's call this exactly what it is: a coordinated and deliberate attempt to erase the political power of Black, Brown, low-income communities, and every other underserved and underrepresented group in America.

Throughout racist redistricting schemes, backed by Republican legislatures and enabled by the Supreme Court, which recently voted to gut the Voting Rights Act, they are attempting to eliminate or weaken districts represented by Black lawmakers and potentially wipe out nearly a third of the Congressional Black Caucus.

They know they cannot defend Donald Trump's failed economic agenda, rising costs, or assaults on working families, so instead, they are trying to rig the system and silence the very communities most harmed by their reckless policies.

This is the same playbook we have seen over and over again from Donald Trump and his destructive administration. First, they attack DEI and celebrate the rollback of programs that helped open the doors for Black and Brown Americans in business, banking, and government. Then, they turn around and act surprised when unemployment skyrockets, opportunities disappear, and entire communities are pushed further behind.

Now, they are taking the same dangerous agenda one step further by trying to erase Black representation from the Halls of Congress.

Let me be very clear: This is bigger than politics. This is about whether America will continue moving forward as a democracy where every voice matters, or whether extremists will drag us backward into a time when power was reserved for only a select few.

Generations of Americans marched, bled, and died for the right to vote and the right to fair representation. Donald Trump and his allies are dishonoring that sacrifice with one of the most aggressive attacks on voting rights and Black political representation we have seen in decades.

Rest assured, I will not be silent. The Black caucus will not be silent. People of good will will not be silent while extremists attempt to dismantle the hard-fought progress that Black Americans built in this country. I will continue fighting to protect our democracy, defend the Voting Rights Act, and ensure Black communities and all underserved communities are heard, represented, and respected in the United States Congress.

□ 2000

Mr. Speaker, yes, as I started this presentation this evening, I talked about the fact that the Black caucus is on the floor, but let me make sure you understand. It is not only on the floor. We will be everywhere. We will be in our churches. We will be in our universities. We will be in the Halls of Congress. We will go to the White House. We will do everything that we need to do to show not only Trump, but America in general, that we are not about to be intimidated by someone who disrespects our history and disrespects the sacrifices that have been made by our forefathers and foremothers.

We know how to fight, and we are going to fight. We are going to fight like you have never seen us fight before. We will be in the hills. We will be on the streets. We will be in the hallways. We will be in the suites everywhere. Get ready for the struggle. Get ready for the fight.

I am not afraid of the Supreme Court, not afraid of the opposite side of the aisle, not intimidated by anything or anybody. Black Americans will fight for what is right. We have made this country stronger. We have fought to make this democracy what it is today, and we are not going back. Get that right.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) from Texas' Ninth District.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. And still I rise, Mr. Speaker. I must applaud the gentlewoman from California and associate myself with her remarks.

As I do so, I will remind us that, yes, the Voting Rights Act was signed by Lyndon Johnson. He did sign it in ink; but the truth be told, it was written in blood. It was written in the blood of those who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday, the blood of Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney. It was signed in ink but written in blood.

This is bigger than that. Yes, this is of paramount importance. It is also about something else that is taking place at the very same time that we are losing our voting rights and many of our Members of Congress. That other thing is seniority. Seniority is under assault in the Congress of the United States of America. It was the Congressional Black Caucus that fought to maintain seniority. If we lose seniority on our watch after the suffering that they went through and all that they did to protect it, what can we say about ourselves?

Seniority, the means by which many of the people who hold committee chairmanships right now who are members of the Congressional Black Caucus, they had those chairpersonships because of seniority.

Seniority has made a difference because seniority has the power. This is a power grab in the sense that it is a power grab to take seats away, but it is also a power grab to take seniority away. When seniority is no longer the means by which we have upward mobility—some things bear repeating. When

seniority is no longer the means by which we will have upward mobility, money will rule, and we will lose. We will lose.

MAXINE WATERS became chair, the only woman ever of any hue to chair the Committee on Financial Services, because of seniority. BENNIE THOMPSON was the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security because of seniority, and the list goes on and on.

My closing words are these: I want my record to show that when seniority was at risk, I did everything that I could to protect it. I am going to fight to protect the seniority system because that is the system that allows us to deliver more goods and services to our communities.

Yes, there are exceptions, Barbara Jordan being one; but exceptions don't make the rule, they prove the rule. Seniority must stand, and I stand with seniority.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) from Wisconsin's Fourth District.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for yielding. I do have to note that she comes from the heart of the Confederacy originally, and I was really proud when Virginia voters voted to redistrict to align their votes with the current detriment of votes that the Republican Party seeks.

Ms. MCCLELLAN, I was just recently reading the book by JIM CLYBURN, our colleague. What that book tells us is this is just not new. People have talked about it. It has been 13 days since the Supreme Court acted in the Callais decision, but it is a long history since the 19th century of trying to disenfranchise formerly enslaved people. This is just another day. This is part of American history to try to deny African Americans not only the vote, but their humanity.

Now, Ms. MCCLELLAN, you are from the heart of the Confederacy, but I want you to know that this is not just a southern thing. I am from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called the Selma of the North because of the discriminatory practices that our voters face. As a matter of fact, when I was in the State legislature, I fought our then-Governor over seemingly innocent requirements for voter ID because I knew that that was the camel's nose under the tent to disenfranchise people. In fact, when that law went into place in 2016, that is when Donald Trump won the Presidency in Wisconsin.

You have heard from many speakers today, and I won't consume all the time by talking and going on and on. I am just going to say this: I am encouraged. And while I am heartbroken by what the Supreme Court did 13 days ago, this ain't new. We have been here before, and we have the script of how to fix it because we have went through this. We saw the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. We saw Supreme Court decisions.

We saw Presidencies. Guess what: Black people and Americans have always risen to the occasion.

We stand on the shoulders of giants like Ezekiel Gillespie from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who sued the State of Wisconsin in 1865 for the right to vote. We stand on the shoulders of giants like John Lewis, John Robert Lewis. We know, Mr. Speaker, that a new day will surface again, and this will not be the end. Why? Because we are undeterred.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) from Georgia's Fourth District.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for yielding, and I thank her for anchoring this CBC Special Order hour. I also shout out to the leadership of CBC's chair, YVETTE CLARKE, for the work that she is doing.

Mr. Speaker, I can't breathe. I am not saying those words to talk about what George Floyd said about 6 years ago before he was choked to death. Those words are not from him. Those are the words that democracy is uttering, is crying: I can't breathe. I can't breathe because MAGA controls the Presidency. MAGA controls the House, the Senate, and MAGA controls the United States Supreme Court. MAGA has a trifecta.

I can't breathe. Democracy can't breathe. For years, there has been a steady effort by the United States Supreme Court to overrule and get rid of the Voting Rights Act. They started with Shelby County, where they paralyzed the preclearance requirement of the Voting Rights Act. Then they went to Brnovich several years later and made it more difficult to sue for relief under the Voting Rights Act. Then April 29, I think it was, of this year, they nailed the final nail in the coffin of the Voting Rights Act by gutting section 2. They did it and said that it was a denial of equal protection to White folks for racist legislators and legislatures to have to draw districts that offered or enabled Black people and communities of interest to have an opportunity to elect a Representative of their choice.

□ 2010

They said that that was the denial of equal protection to White folks. In other words, political gerrymandering trumps the ability of Black people to be able to elect the Representative of their choice.

And they did that premised on the conclusion—the false conclusion that we are now living in a post-racial society, so there is no longer a need for the Voting Rights Act. So it was a fit of judicial activism, a predictable fit of judicial activism.

We have got to do something about this United States Supreme Court. We have got to do something about this MAGA legislature. We have got to do something about the head MAGA at the White House. We do that through exercising our right to vote.

We shall do so in November. We shall do so in 2026, and we will be prepared for 2030 redistricting. We will be prepared for what happens. We are going to take your foot off of the neck of democracy, and it is not going to be just us. It is going to be right-thinking people around this country who are going to join us.

That is why I appreciate us leading the way, and I look forward to better days ahead. We shall not stop. We won't slow down. You are not going to drive us off. You are not going to kick us out. We are going to be here. This is our country. And we are going to live in it together, like it or not.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY), the Second District.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman MCCLELLAN for organizing this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise because the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, dealing a devastating blow to our democracy. Their decision will allow States, particularly in the South, to dilute and try to silence Black voters.

For decades, Black Americans and activists fought and bled for our right to vote. Once again, we have to organize, mobilize, and fight for our right to vote. When I say we, I mean a collective we. Dems won't win if all Dems don't participate to revert this very, very racist action. We need everybody involved.

It doesn't matter what State you come from, what the color of your skin is, or what your religion is. Now is the time to fight back. Make no mistake, Republicans are trying to steal this election because they know they cannot win it fair and square.

They have gutted our healthcare, raised prices for everyday necessities, turned their backs on hardworking people, and now they want to stay in power.

Democrats, now is not the time to grow weary, to shutter the windows, to close the door. Now is the time to show up, to stand up, and to speak up for democracy.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH), the Seventh District.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the Supreme Court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais and what this moment means for the future of our democracy.

For generations, Americans have fought to make this Nation live up to its promise. Our democracy did not become more inclusive by accident. It became stronger because people of color organized, marched, sacrificed, and demanded equal access to the ballot box. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was one of the greatest achievements of that struggle, opening doors that had been locked to so many people of color for far too long.

This decision weakens protections that helped ensure Black voters and communities of color could fully participate in our democracy and have fair

representation in Congress. Let me be clear, this decision does not end our fight, and it does not weaken our determination. The Congressional Black Caucus has always understood their progress in this country is never permanent unless we continue to defend it.

We have prepared for moments like this by rallying and building coalitions all across this Nation, and we will continue doing exactly that, because even in difficult moments, I still believe in the power of the people and the power of my people. I still believe in the strength of our communities, and I still believe that when Americans come together to protect our democracy, we will prevail.

That is why we will keep pushing forward. We will continue expanding access to the ballot box, protecting fair representation and ensuring that every single voice in this country is heard.

When we reclaim the majority—and, yes, that is coming, too—we will work to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and continue the work of building a democracy that truly reflects all of America.

This is not the moment to retreat. It is the moment to organize, to vote, and to remind the American people that democracy is strongest when everyone has a seat at the table. The fight for voting rights did not begin with this court, and it will not end with this decision.

We have overcome far too much, sacrificed far too much, and achieved far too much progress to turn back now.

I look forward to working alongside my CBC colleagues as we move forward together. We will move forward together, united, and committed to building a democracy that is more just and Representative for all of our future generations.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. BROWN), the 11th District.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative MCCLELLAN for leading tonight's Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand with my CBC colleagues in this fight as we stand up for the people we represent.

Mr. Speaker, for decades, the far right has sold this country a lie, a lie that racism ended in 1965, a lie that discrimination is ancient history. For years, that rhetoric lived in chat rooms in the ugliest corners of American life. Well, today it lives in the highest courts in the land, cloaked in robes.

This conservative Supreme Court has taken a wrecking ball to the Voting Rights Act, one of the greatest achievements of the civil rights movement. Now, after the Louisiana v. Callais ruling, there is barely any of the law left.

Before this ruling, Black voters in the South had at least some defense against intentional political extinction. Now that is gone. Mr. Speaker, what happens next tells you everything

you need to know. The ink was barely dry before Republican States rushed to redraw maps and move election dates—Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, State after State after State.

Let's be honest about what this is. This is a coordinated effort to engineer electorates so that Trump has all the White majority districts he needs, and the tragedy, the disgrace is that this rush to redraw proves exactly why the Voting Rights Act was needed in the first place.

If they are successful, some of the States with the largest Black populations in the country will be represented by all-White delegations and majority White districts.

□ 2020

We cannot and will not take this sitting down. We will organize, mobilize, and use our voices. We will fight this in Congress. We don't have a voting rights majority in this body right now, but we soon will, and we will restore the Voting Rights Act.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we must confront the center of this crisis: an unacceptable Supreme Court.

The Voting Rights Act was not some historical footnote. It was the law of the land for decades. It was one of the crowning achievements of American democracy, and this Court has systematically hollowed it out.

No institution in this country is above scrutiny, and no court should have the power to erase protections won through blood, sacrifice, and struggle without the American people demanding reform. Our constitutional system was never designed to crown nine people as permanent and untouchable rulers of our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, our brothers and sisters are being silenced across the South, but this Congress will make sure that those voices are heard loudly, clearly, and unapologetically.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. FOUSHEE), the Fourth District.

Mrs. FOUSHEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for anchoring this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today alongside my colleagues in opposition to the all-out assault on Black Americans' right to vote in the wake of Trump's Supreme Court's choice to gut the Voting Rights Act.

The Voting Rights Act was a piece of legislation that was won in blood. Though we can see the racism and hatred still present in our Nation, the passage of the Voting Rights Act was a line in the sand: that we would protect and include Black voices in our democracy.

In the nearly 200 years between the establishment of this country and the passage of the Voting Rights Act, millions of Black Americans died fighting for this right.

It wasn't a right that we achieved just through a protest in Selma, where

they attacked hundreds of our brothers and sisters. It wasn't a right that we achieved just through a march to the Capitol alongside hundreds of thousands of people across our communities. It was a right that we achieved also through the struggle of the millions of Black Americans whose stories were never told and whose voices were never heard by our government.

The millions of Black Americans throughout our history organized and fought, without the recognition that they deserved, to lay the groundwork for people like me to have the opportunity to represent the very congressional districts where we once attended segregated elementary schools.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act was that hope that, finally, we would no longer go without our voices being heard and that none of us would have to die for that right ever again.

Now, as if we needed any confirmation of the rationale behind the senseless Supreme Court ruling, Republican statehouses nationwide are now mobilizing in an effort to target Black Members of Congress and Black majority districts.

In Tennessee, they ignored Black representatives locked in arms on the floor of the State legislature as they dismantled the only Black majority district in a State where the Clinton 12 once marched for their right to attend integrated schools.

In Alabama, they stared on as my colleague, Congressman FIGURES, pleaded with them to stop redrawing the court-mandated congressional map that gave Alabama, the State at the epicenter of the modern civil rights movement, two Black Members of Congress for the first time in its history.

In Virginia, they overthrew a referendum that would help balance the power in Congress, the same State that once approved a referendum by white supremacists to rewrite the State constitution in order to disenfranchise Black voters.

In my State, North Carolina, we have seen this playbook carried out with the redrawing of congressional maps to eliminate the seats of three Democrats and the redrawing of that congressional map just a few years later in a concerted effort to attack Black lawmakers.

I consider myself incredibly lucky to still be here in the Halls of Congress while many of our fellow Black lawmakers have not been as fortunate.

As one of the few Members of Congress left who experienced the systemic segregation put in place across the South firsthand as a young girl in an all-Black elementary school, I stand here with this message: We will not go back.

We deserve more than to have our government stomp on our voices, our representation, and our votes. Just as I deserved access to the same elementary school as the White boys and girls, our ancestors fought, bled, and died for the right to vote and the right to have our voices heard by Congress.

As we feel their pain with every step back that this government forces upon us, rest assured that we will always come back stronger.

Your cheating of our electoral systems through gerrymandering and voter disenfranchisement is an admission that your leadership has failed the American people. We see through you. We will not rest, and we will continue to honor the work of our ancestors with action.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WIED). The gentlewoman from Virginia has 10 minutes remaining.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY), representing the Fourth District.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Virginia for leading this Special Order tonight and my colleagues who have spoken on the floor in shock and dismay with respect to what the Supreme Court did in the Voting Rights Act ruling just a few days ago, and also what the Virginia Supreme Court did in the ruling that it passed down.

I will say this: Many of my neighbors, friends, and the students I have had a chance to speak to recently were also surprised, shocked, disappointed, and dismayed by what happened.

They have also been surprised by President Trump sending the FBI in to seize ballots in Atlanta to try to prove that he won an election 4 years ago that he obviously lost.

They have been surprised, dismayed, and disheartened by what they saw with respect to ICE in Minneapolis and the recognition that there is a strong possibility that ICE and the National Guard may be showing up in polling places in November.

They have also been shocked and surprised that icons like JIM CLYBURN and EMANUEL CLEAVER, who served this body and this Nation honorably for decades, are at the risk of being forced out of office based on these unfair rulings.

I will say this: I have been really heartened by what I saw from those young people when I was speaking to them over the past 2 weeks. They were concerned that they couldn't live up to the moment, that there was nothing that they could do, and that they were too young to have an impact.

Yet, I reminded them of people like John Lewis, who was 18 or 19 when he began his work in the civil rights movement that culminated in the Voting Rights Act, which was gutted just a few weeks ago. I reminded them that Dr. Martin Luther King was only 25 when he led the Montgomery bus boycott and was still working on his dissertation and raising a family, all at the same time.

I reminded them that there were many leaders who came before us— young people, men and women—who

saw the need for service and a call to have an impact, and they stepped into that void.

I reminded them that the Freedom Riders had people on at 18, 19, and 20 years old who they forced to write and sign wills before they got on those buses because they knew that they would be violently attacked, and they were.

We can meet this moment, just as those ancestors met those moments, just as our predecessors met those moments. All we need to do is go to the voting booth.

We have to make sure we get out there and do that work, push in the streets, campaign, stand up, make sure we fight, speak, have our voices heard, and bring everybody out who we can because it is critical for us to win in November in order to turn this around and show them that, despite all the efforts that they have made—the Trump Supreme Court, the seizure of the ballots, all the things that they have been doing with the executive orders and the like—we can defeat all of those in November. But we have to show up, and we will.

□ 2030

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. MCCLELLAN) for hosting this Special Order hour.

The House is on fire, and our democracy is under attack. This time, instead of storming the Capitol, they are changing the maps to silence the voices of millions of Americans.

The Supreme Court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais has given States a green light to weaken Black political power under the false cover of race neutrality.

In Memphis, Tennessee, a historic, organic majority-Black district has been carved up to dilute its voice.

In Louisiana, Alabama, South Carolina, and Mississippi, similar efforts are under way.

It is ironic that the States where the power stealing is happening right now are Confederate States where the tension of race remains unresolved.

Let's be clear. This virus is contagious. Wake up, people. This is not coincidence. This is coordination. The attacks are dangerous, but so is the silence. Silence in this moment is complicity, and history will document who spoke up and who stayed quiet.

Let's not forget, the Black vote has never just elected Black leaders. It has been the backbone of coalitions that lifted others into power.

In 2020, Black voters in Georgia not only elected Reverend Warnock to the Senate, they also elected JON OSSOFF, flipping two red seats blue and giving Democrats the tie-breaking vote in the Senate.

They have consistently shown up for and elected Presidents like Joe Biden,

proving once again that not only Black leaders benefit from Black political engagement and trust.

Let me be clear about something else. Black Members of Congress do not only represent Black communities. We represent everyone. Many of us serve diverse, even majority White districts, delivering results for all of our constituents.

When these maps are redrawn to eliminate Black representation, it is not about fairness. It is about fear and real talk. If race is truly not a factor, then why are Black districts always the ones being dismantled?

Let's say it plainly. If some of our colleagues were not afraid of Black voters, then they would not be working so hard to silence us.

We have to meet this moment with urgency. Pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, organize, mobilize, turn out, and hold receipts. This is bigger than any one district. It is about whether democracy works for all of us.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MENEFFEE).

Mr. MENEFFEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the right to vote is under grave attack. The Supreme Court opened the door, and Republican officials throughout the South are running straight through it.

Republican State legislatures are racing to redraw congressional maps across the South, and they have one clear goal: to make sure that Black communities cannot elect a candidate of their choice.

Look at Tennessee. Memphis is a majority-Black city, and instead of keeping it whole in one district, Republicans sliced it into three separate districts and imported White voters from hundreds of miles away. That is not an accident. That is a blueprint.

In Texas, a Trump-appointed Federal judge found that Republicans used race to dismantle minority districts, like in my hometown of Houston.

I have seen so many Republican officials argue that this is not about race. But look at North Carolina where Republican legislators requested data on voting patterns broken down by race. They then changed the voting rules based on that data, and a Federal court said that they targeted African Americans with "almost surgical precision."

This is about race. These maps are a pattern, and after Callais, it is spreading like wildfire.

Cracking Black communities apart district by district is not politics. It is a declaration that Black voices do not belong in this democracy.

Our Nation is better than this. Racist cheating has no place in the greatest democracy on Earth.

This Congress must fight back.

The right to choose our own Representatives is sacred and something our ancestors have fought and bled for, and we will not let it be stripped from us community by community or ZIP code by ZIP code.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I took my oath of office 3 years ago on the Bible that my father kept his poll tax receipt in that he paid when he turned old enough to vote in Tennessee.

In my office is a book written by my great-grandfather. He tells a story. My great-grandfather was born on the plantation where his parents were enslaved. He went to register to vote in 1902 in Alabama. He was given a literacy test. He got all the questions right. The registrar turned to his assistant and said: "I need more questions because this nigger got them all right." He was on a list of people not to register to vote because he organized Blacks in the community. Then he was told he had to find three White men to vouch for his character, and he did it.

Today, just like my great-grandfather, just like my father, I and the Congressional Black Caucus will fight any obstacle put in our way to ensure that we participate in this government by, of, and for the people.

We won't take this sitting down.

The Supreme Court may have dealt us a devastating blow, but we are going to get up, just like John Lewis got up after he was beaten in the head from marching across the bridge in Selma for the right to vote.

This is not the end of the war. This is only the beginning where we will ensure that liberty and justice for all means all; that a government by, of, and for the people includes all the people.

We will not be silenced.

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

NATIONAL JUBILEE OF PRAYER, PRAISE, AND THANKSGIVING

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. BRECHEEN of Oklahoma was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

(Mr. BRECHEEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Speaker, on May 17 in a few days it will be declared a National Day of Jubilee, Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving. President Donald Trump announced this Day of Jubilee at the National Prayer Breakfast when he invited "Americans from all across the country to come together on our National Mall to pray, to give thanks." And he went on to say: "We're going to rededicate America as one Nation under God."

It is historically significant that President Donald Trump would say this. It is historically important that leaders of our Nation are gathered behind me to begin to recognize the importance of calling our Nation back to God and rededicating America as a Nation devoted and dependent upon God.

In doing so, it is not only right, it is historically backed up by the 150 different calls to prayer, humiliation,

fasting, and thanksgiving that have been issued in our country's history by our Nation's leaders.

Of these 150-plus calls to prayer, 74 of them have been issued by U.S. Presidential proclamations with 36 of our 47 United States Presidents signing proclamations for national prayer.

Between 1775 and 1784 alone, at least 15 official proclamations for prayer, fasting, and humiliation—yes, humiliation. Someone asked me: Why are you using that word? That word is in the historic record. I think some don't realize you don't get humility unless you are humiliated. But times of prayer, fasting, and humiliation were issued by Congress.

Records also show that there have been over 1,500 State and Federal calls for national prayer since 1775. That is a truly remarkable number.

This coming Jubilee Day of Prayer was first established by the Continental Congress 250 years ago. This coming Sunday it will be exactly 250 years ago when on May 17, 1776, they set aside a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer.

This original proclamation stated that: In times of impending calamity and distress, it becomes the indispensable duty with true penitence, publicly to acknowledge the overruling providence of God; to confess and deplore our offenses against Him; and to supplicate His interposition for averting the threatened danger and prospering our strenuous efforts in the cause of freedom, virtue, and posterity.

This congressional dialogue continues that: The Congress, therefore, do earnestly recommend, that the 17th day of May next, be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by a sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease His righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain His pardon and forgiveness; humbly imploring His assistance to frustrate the cruel purposes of our unnatural enemies; and by inclining their hearts to justice and benevolence, prevent the further effusion of kindred blood.

□ 2040

These were the words of our Continental Congress almost exactly a few days away from now, 250 years ago this coming Sunday. They wrote that, declared that, only 7 weeks ahead of when the Declaration of Independence would come forth.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), the Speaker of the House, for his commentary.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear brother, Congressman JOSH BRECHEEN, for leading this Special Order. It is an important occasion and one that a number of my colleagues will be here to help mark tonight. It is appropriate for us to do that.

I want to reiterate what my friend here has explained. It is this weekend, on May 17th, that our country is going to mark the National Jubilee of Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving. As he noted, that date marks exactly two and a half centuries since our Founders met in the Second Continental Congress and declared a day of, yes, humiliation, fasting, and prayer to ask for God's guidance in the cause of freedom.

I think it is an appropriate way to say it. We ought to begin with repentance, and they recognized it back then.

This Sunday, Americans across the country are going to gather once again to do that very same thing, and what an important time it is for us to do so.

Here, on The National Mall, we are going to have tens of thousands of Americans join in prayer to rededicate our lives and our Nation back to God.

For Americans of faith, this is an opportunity to help our Nation recommit to the foundations upon which this country was built, as every previous generation in our history has done before.

Since the very beginning, prayer is how this grand experiment in self-governance has endured and prospered for 250 years.

Indeed, when 56 patriots gathered in Philadelphia to pledge their lives and their fortunes and their sacred honor for the birth of this new Nation, they began in prayer.

To this day, we open every single legislative session in this House and in the Senate, the other Chamber, in prayer. That is an acknowledgment, in some small way, of the famous admonition that is inscribed prominently right there above the head of the Speaker. It says there above the rostrum: "In God We Trust."

If you look, by the way, in the visitor's guide to the House Chamber—I think it is somewhere about on page 14—it says that Congress voted in 1962 to put that motto there, to add it to the marble, it says in the guide, as a rebuke to the Soviets because of their philosophy. That was during the Cold War. The Soviet's philosophy is Marxism, communism, and socialism. They all begin with one common premise: that there is no God.

Our predecessors in this body wanted every single one of us to look right there and understand and acknowledge, every single day that we are here to work, that our Nation is built on the opposite idea. We are built on the self-evident truth that it is God who gives us our rights and not the government.

At this pivotal moment in our Nation's history, we have to remember all of that. We have to acknowledge that the miracle of our founding and the countless miracles that have followed have been the work of Almighty God, and it is indeed in Him whom we trust.

So as we approach the 250th anniversary, it is right that we gather formally, just as our Founders did, to beseech the firm protection of divine providence once again.