

Andrew Leek established a funeral home so that Black families, denied dignity in life by segregation, could at least be afforded dignity in death.

Spencer Leek, Jr., carried that mission forward with devotion, compassion, and grace. From answering phones at age 12 to becoming a licensed funeral director and vice president of Leek and Sons, he understood that his work was not merely a business, but it was a ministry. He comforted the grieving, uplifted the forgotten, and ensured that every family, regardless of means, was treated with respect and humanity.

For generations, Leek and Sons has stood as a trusted institution in Chicago and across this Nation in Chicago and America's Black communities. Spencer Leek, Jr., strengthened that institution by remaining deeply devoted to family, community, and service. He helped shepherd home-going celebrations for civil rights leaders, public servants, artists, and everyday citizens, whose lives mattered equally in his eyes.

His legacy reminds us that history is not only made by those who stand before huge crowds, but also by those who quietly serve others with fidelity and love.

Mr. Speaker, we honor Spencer Leek, Jr., by continuing his commitment to dignity, compassion, and community.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST DISMANTLING OF VOTING RIGHTS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois was recognized for half the time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DOWNING). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their presence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the question: Which side of history are you standing on? Now, some of you are here because you want to be here. Some of you are here simply because you walked past this floor to get somewhere else.

Either way, God has a plan, and that plan today is that you are going to hear the truth because this is a Special Order hour, and the order I have been given not by the Speaker of this House but by God, who made us all equal in his eyes, through this Republic, has never fully agreed and understood by all Members of this body that we have the right to stand in this well on the floor of the people's House and ask every Member of this body a question that cannot be avoided. It cannot be

postponed, and it cannot be answered with procedural language or partisan talking points.

The question is this: On the eve of America's 250th birthday, which side of history are you standing for?

Now, I want you to notice something. In a few weeks, this Nation is going to celebrate. There are going to be parades. There are going to be speeches. They are going to have fireworks that light up the skies from sea to shining sea. Politicians on both sides of this aisle are going to stand at podiums and invoke the Founding Fathers and speak about liberty and justice and the greatest democracy the world has ever seen.

I want to ask you, gently, at first: What democracy are you talking about because I know my history, and I was born in this country, and I have read the documents.

The democracy that we are celebrating this summer, the democracy of 1776, did not include me or my ancestors, did not include my grandmother or my great-grandparents, did not include my great-great-grandmother who was somebody's property under the law of this land. It did not include the millions and millions of women and children who built this country's wealth with their bodies and their blood and their genius and were given in return not citizenship but chains.

□ 2030

In 1776, it was not a democracy. In 1787, it was not a democracy. They counted us as three-fifths of a human being to give slaveholders more power in this very Congress.

In 1865, it was not a democracy. We got the 13th Amendment and got the Black codes in the same season. In 1868, it was not a democracy. The 14th Amendment was ratified while African Americans and elected officials were being murdered across the South.

In 1870, it was not a democracy. The 15th Amendment was passed, and within 10 years, the Supreme Court had gutted its enforcement, and the Redeemers had taken back the South at the point of a rifle.

In 1920, our country was not a democracy. Women got the right to vote, but most Black women in the South could not exercise it. America did not overcome.

By any honest definition, it was not a democracy in this country until August 6, 1965, the day that President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, the day that this Nation finally, after 189 years of claiming to believe in democracy, extended a meaningful, enforceable, protected right to vote to all of its citizens regardless of race, 189 years in the making.

Let that sink into your spirit: 189 years of fireworks, 189 years of founding myths. "We the people," it was said, and not one day of actual democracy for the people who look like me.

I am 60 years of age. I was born in 1966. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was

passed. I am the first generation of Americans ever born with equal rights under the law of this land. My generation is the first in 250 years. We are the first, 60 years of age.

If that doesn't disturb you, if that doesn't shake something in your soul, if you can hear that and feel nothing, then I want to suggest respectfully that something has gone wrong, something has gone morally numb.

Now, the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*, has gutted section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, has taken the spine out of the only serious legal protection that Blacks, Mexicans, women, and others have had since 1965. It has done, with legal language and constitutional reasoning, what the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan used to do with economic pressure and shotguns. They have changed the method. They have not changed the mission.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege and pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GARCÍA), one of the leading outstanding voices for human rights and democracy in the United States of America and my colleague and friend.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be joined by the first Mexican American to serve in the United States House of Representatives from the entire Midwest. He has fought for the rights and well-being of his constituents and all Americans for decades. I am honored to yield to the gentleman, the first person of Mexican-American ancestry to serve in the House of Representatives from the State of Illinois, the Honorable Congressman Mr. CHUY GARCÍA.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative JACKSON for leading this Special Order hour for the Congressional Progressive Caucus, shining a spotlight on the Voting Rights Act, progress that has been made, and, most importantly, efforts to dismantle it and disenfranchise millions of people across the land and undermine our democracy.

Let me share a personal story. I arrived in the United States in 1965, the same year the Voting Rights Act was passed. I was a little boy from Durango, Mexico. I didn't speak a word of English, let alone know about the Constitution or the Founding Fathers, but I understood one thing: My parents believed in this country and brought me to this country because they knew that we could do better and that we could pursue our dream of a better life in America.

Years later, I became a citizen.

The Voting Rights Act gave me the opportunity I never dreamed possible: running for office. It was not because power invited me in, but because people in my community organized. We built power and exercised our right to vote. That is the magic of the Voting Rights Act.

□ 2040

Yet, it is precisely why Republicans have been working for decades to weaken our voting rights. When our opponents recently broke Black neighborhoods in Memphis into pieces, they knew exactly what they were doing. In Tennessee, Alabama, and Louisiana, getting rid of majority Black districts isn't accidental, either.

Heading to Court to make section 2 of the Voting Rights Act weaker, it is deliberate, and when Republicans push a bill that prevents married women from voting over name changes and restricts some eligible voters, that is their plan.

This is not election integrity. It is Klan tactics in a business suit, the Jim Crow school of law. They do not say "literacy test" anymore. They say: Bring us new paperwork. They don't say "Whites only" anymore. They say: Race neutral.

To them, fair means our communities can contribute to society by working and paying taxes, but we are not worthy enough to elect our own Representatives. It also means that you can pack, slice, and scatter Black and Latino voters, as long as those calling the shots label it smart politics.

Chicago's Latino community waited decades for real representation in Congress. The Fourth Congressional District of Illinois became the first Latino-majority congressional district in the Midwest because the Voting Rights Act had teeth and because our communities refused to disappear.

The only thing that they wanted was a level playing field, to be represented. We organized and won the Fourth Congressional District. Thirty years later, there is still just one other Latino in Congress from the whole Midwest region. She is a Latina, and I am proud to serve with her.

Representation matters, and that is why our opponents are attacking our voting rights. Nobody spends years in court trying to weaken voters who do not matter. They do not redraw maps because we are weak. They redraw maps because we are powerful. They fear Black power. They fear Latino power. They fear Asian power. They fear working people standing together and saying: We will not bow to white supremacy.

Right now, it is Black districts, but Latino districts are next, mark my words. Right now, it is Black districts, but Latino districts will follow.

They are coming after our power because they are afraid of what happens when working people stand together. I learned that from Harold Washington. Before he became Chicago's first Black mayor, Harold Washington served in this House of Representatives from the First District of Illinois. Representative JACKSON, and helped to strengthen the Voting Rights Act. When I served with him as a member of the Chicago City Council, I saw true multiracial democracy come alive because of the Voting Rights Act.

So let's call the attack on working rights on voting rights for what it is: It is about power and control.

Our neighbors did not cross rivers and bridges, march in the streets, organize in church basements, fight in courtrooms, and knock on doors to sit down now.

I came here the year the Voting Rights Act became law. Sixty years later, I am here to say: We are not sitting down. We are not turning back. We will continue to work today for voting rights and representation for all.

I thank Congressman JACKSON for raising his voice and the awareness for all of our American people to know.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman CHUY GARCÍA for his remarks. I must say it is a pleasure and the privilege of a lifetime to serve in Congress with a childhood hero and friend of mine, my colleague, Congressman CHUY GARCÍA.

I would like to also note for the RECORD, Congressman GARCÍA was the chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus when President Barack Obama was a former State senator from the State of Illinois. Congressman GARCÍA has always affiliated himself with the working class. He has never forgotten his roots. I thank him for his service and his kind words and his steadfastness.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and indeed my pleasure to introduce, to share with my colleague Congressman TAKANO.

This is indeed LGBTQ month, Pride Month. Congressman TAKANO is the first person of the LGBTQ community and of color to openly serve in the House of Representatives. Congressman GARCÍA was the first Mexican American.

Mr. TAKANO is the first person of Japanese ancestry to serve in the United States House of Representatives. Many people of our community have just gotten to this great body that has contributed so much, but he is also the son and great-grandson of immigrants that were detained in U.S. concentration camps of Japanese ancestry. He bears the history and the lineage and the legacy of that tormented history, and he proudly serves. He has contributed so much for so many.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), and I thank him for his service.

Mr. TAKANO. I thank Congressman JACKSON for yielding. I thank him for that wonderful introduction. I won't claim to be the first Japanese American in Congress. There were many that came before me, such as Senator Inouye, Senator Spark Matsunaga, and many others such as Bob Matsui in the House of Representatives. But all of what you said about my family having been interned or incarcerated during World War II, that is the burden of history that I do carry and it is something that I think is very important and relevant to today.

I want to focus on the Voting Rights Act, which is the topic of this Special Order presented by the Congressional Progressive Caucus tonight.

In 1965, when I was probably 4 years old, President Lyndon B. Johnson gave a historic address to the Congress in the wake of Bloody Sunday. Bloody Sunday, you will recall, is that moment in Selma when John Lewis, among others, crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge and were met with State troopers and the local police and they were bludgeoned and whipped and were charged by officers on horseback because they were marching to Montgomery to demand voting rights.

What America saw shocked their conscience, and what they saw was what shocked the conscience of America. It led President Johnson to address Congress, and he said these words before in this very Chamber to a joint session. He said: "The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders." A few months after that speech, the Voting Rights Act was the law of the land. And that is our topic today.

The voting rights protections, the Voting Rights Act protections were historic and gave rise to what historians consider the second Reconstruction era because for the first time in history the government ensured that minority Americans, Americans of color, could elect their own preferred candidate. The practice of gerrymandering to dilute the ability for communities of interest, communities of color to be able to elect their preferred candidate was the norm.

So one of the people who benefited from that first redistricting after the 1965 Voting Rights Act was put into law was Barbara Jordan from Houston, Texas, the first Black woman to represent the South and a personal hero of mine.

She was elected to Congress in a newly drawn Houston, Texas, district in 1972. I remember watching Barbara Jordan on television as a 13- or 14-year-old. She was famously a member of the House Judiciary Committee that was considering Articles of Impeachment against then-President Richard Nixon.

She famously called herself on the dais an inquisitor, and she recounted how improbable it was that she was an inquisitor sitting on the House Judiciary Committee.

She was there in great part because of the Voting Rights Act. If you just learned the history about this remarkable Member of Congress, she said on the House Judiciary Committee: "My faith in the Constitution is whole; it is complete; it is total." That declaration made a huge impact on me. To see an African-American woman who talked about how improbable it would be for her to be a Member of Congress, it made me, a very young boy, believe that some day I could be a Member of this body.

Thanks to the Voting Rights Act, this Congress is the most diverse Congress in history. With 26 percent of its

Members being people of color, our legislative body is the most reflective of the country's population than it ever has been.

The Supreme Court has taken a wrecking ball to that progress in its decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*. Now Republican Governors and State legislatures have canceled primaries to ram through maps, oftentimes in a matter of days, that suppress the voting power of Black and Hispanic Americans.

Mr. Speaker, instead of the Republican Party passing bills to lower the cost of living, they have seen fit to rig maps to try and keep the Republicans in power.

The Republicans would rather shred the single most transformative piece of legislation in the history of our democracy that has ever been, and they will do it if it means that the President can continue to build his ballroom, continue his insane war, and enrich himself and his family.

□ 2050

The President knows that if congressional maps were fair there would be enough of us here in Congress who would demand accountability for the grift he is running out of the White House. There would be enough voices demanding that he get the help he urgently needs as he continues to unravel in front of the world.

However, Mr. Speaker, my faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, and it is total. I know that while the Supreme Court may have dismantled the Voting Rights Act, Congress is not powerless, and the American people, in spite of the efforts to rig the maps and to draw districts to keep Republicans in power, we can and will prevail in the coming months. We will have the votes. If we have the votes, then we can put an end to gerrymandering and restore and strengthen protections against racial discrimination in voting so that every voice counts.

There is no question that this Supreme Court is facing a crisis of credibility. Americans are questioning the Court's legitimacy to make decisions based on the law and the history of this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is also time to put a check on the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court that has taken a wrecking ball to the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman TAKANO. I thank him for honoring his family's history and legacy. I am thankful for his service. I thank him for his voice during this critical hour when America's democracy is being challenged.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor and my privilege to share this podium with an outstanding young man of Indian ancestry and of the Hindu faith. He is the first person of Asian and Hindu faith to grace this esteemed body under this dome, on this floor, and in this well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the honorable gentleman from the great State of California (Mr. KHANNA).

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JACKSON for his leadership and vision on this 250th anniversary year of our country. He spoke out when there was silence in this body, when our leadership was distracted, and when the country was consumed by Donald Trump's diversions.

The gentleman spoke out and said that there was a case in the Supreme Court that is gutting the Voting Rights Act and that will take away from Black Americans the right to freely choose their Representatives. We were all complacent while the gentleman was sounding the alarm.

My friend knew, as the son of the great Reverend Jackson and as someone who has spent his entire life fighting for civil rights, he knew the dangers when powerful people try to strip away civil rights and freedoms from Black Americans.

Unfortunately, Congressman JACKSON was right. A Supreme Court decision has been the fastest rollback of Black freedom and Black political rights since Rutherford Hayes ended Reconstruction.

Now I read that they want to go after districts with representation of majority Black Americans, majority Asian Americans, I don't believe they should go after my district just because it happens to be a majority Asian-American district with people of all backgrounds having a community of interest. I don't think they should be splitting up Congressman JACKSON's district just to give the Democrats a little bit more of a partisan advantage, to take away a community that has struggled for freedom and civil rights for decades and split that up and not allow them to freely choose who their Representative is. That is what is going on in this country, and it is wrong.

Tonight, as someone who is the grandson of a freedom fighter who spent 4 years in jail with Gandhi and as someone whose parents sacrificed everything they had so that I could have a chance, I stand in solidarity with my friend to say that we have come too far to roll back.

I stand both for my friend's voting rights amendment and affirmative amendment next week which he will be introducing and for his standing up for voting rights in majority-minority districts.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman RO KHANNA for his leadership and lending his voice. He is another first in the House of Representatives whom I am proud to call a Democrat, and I am proud to call a great American who is standing on the right side of history.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce the next speaker who is the first in her family to graduate from college and went on to become a critical care physician and steadfast public servant. She answered the call to public service. She understands the urgent need to help ensure and help provide care for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the honorable gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. DEXTER).

Ms. DEXTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JACKSON for convening this Special Order hour and for humbling me with such a kind introduction, but mostly for the gentleman's leadership and his steadfast commitment to protecting the Voting Rights Act.

When I was completing my medical residency in Colorado in the early 2000s, I distinctly remember standing in line for hours to vote with two small children in tow at the single polling location available to me. It was hours with toddlers in the glory of Colorado's most unpredictable weather.

That experience was a world away from voting in my home State of Oregon where, since 1996, our State has proudly chosen to vote entirely by mail. It is safe and secure. You can't hack paper. It is harder to intimidate a voter in their own home, and turnout is higher. In fact, in 2023, Oregon had the single highest voter turnout in the Nation.

That is how representative democracy is supposed to work. People should be able to easily exercise their voices and to use their power.

For generations, the Voting Rights Act helped move us closer to that promise. It stood as one of the most successful civil rights laws in our Nation's history, borne from those who marched, bled, and died for the right to have a say in their government.

Today, that promise is under assault. Over the last decade, a series of decisions handed down by a radical Supreme Court has steadily weakened voting protections. Most recently, Trump's hand-picked Supreme Court Justices gutted section 2 of the Voting Rights Act which allowed voters to challenge racially discriminatory maps.

This has unleashed a wave of racist gerrymandering across the South designed to dilute Black voting power, erase hard-won gains of the civil rights movement, and rig the political system for Republicans to stay in power.

In Alabama, the far-right Republican State legislature is now moving forward with a congressional map that all but erases one of two majority Black districts.

This is a map that judges in Alabama rejected, but that Trump's handpicked, radical Supreme Court is letting move forward.

It is a betrayal, and that betrayal and assault is why last month I traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, with Members of Congress from the Northeast to the West to stand in solidarity and to say: We are not going back.

Standing there, I felt the weight of history. The people, including the gentleman's father, courageously led this Nation in the fight against segregation and Jim Crow. They will not stand alone now.

We will fight back, and we have the playbook in front of us. This fight is

won in courtrooms and at kitchen tables, at the ballot box and marching in the streets.

Our role here in Congress is clear: to serve as a check on a judiciary that is straying from its constitutional role and weakening the protections that ensure free and fair elections for all Americans. That is why I support term limits for Supreme Court Justices, a binding and enforceable code of ethics for the Court, and to ensure no court and no State legislature can ever again undermine the sacred right to vote.

Congress must pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore Federal protections against racial discrimination in voting. The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy. Oregonians sent me here to protect it, and I will keep fighting to do just that.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am so appreciative of the Congresswoman DEXTER's words and her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to introduce our next speaker whose district was effectively disenfranchised last year during the longest delay in inducting a Member to the House of Representatives. She is also the first Latina ever elected to Congress in the entire history in the State of Arizona.

She is a woman who comes from a proud, progressive, and staunchly American legacy in the ancestry of her father, Raúl Grijalva, who stood with us, who led us, and who taught us. He stood by his values. He has instilled those, and he poured those into his outstanding daughter who is now, I am proud to say, the Congresswoman from the great State of Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. GRIJALVA).

□ 2100

Mrs. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative JACKSON for his steadfast leadership in this fight to protect our democracy, and I thank the CPC for bringing us together for this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, we often talk about the right to vote as if it is just another issue before Congress. It is not just another issue. It is foundational. The right to vote is how people make their voices heard. It is how communities hold their government accountable. It is the foundation upon which every other right rests.

This is why the Supreme Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* is so alarming. For generations, we have marched, organized, and sacrificed to secure protections enshrined in the Voting Rights Act. Those protections helped ensure that communities of color could fully participate in our democracy and elect Representatives who would fight for their interests.

Today, those hard-won protections are being chipped away piece by piece. We are already seeing the consequences across the South. Politicians are rushing to redraw maps and dilute the po-

litical power of communities of color. Instead of expanding participation in our democracy, they are looking for new ways to silence voters, undermine fair representation, and make it more difficult for people to get involved in our democracy.

As an Arizonan, this fight feels especially personal. The Voting Rights Act is not some abstract law to the people I represent. Southern Arizona is home to communities whose political representation has been protected by the Voting Rights Act for generations. Those protections helped ensure that Latino voters and other communities of color had meaningful opportunity to elect leaders who understood their experiences and would fight for them.

The truth is, without the Voting Rights Act, Arizona's political landscape would look very different. The Voting Rights Act helped make it possible for leaders like my dad, Congressman Raúl Grijalva, to serve southern Arizona. It helped make it possible for me to stand here today as the first Latina ever elected from the State of Arizona to Congress.

That representation did not happen by accident. It happened because generations fought to ensure that every community, regardless of race, language, or ZIP Code, could have an equal voice in our democracy.

That is why what is happening today is so dangerous. When courts weaken the Voting Rights Act and politicians engage in racial gerrymandering, they are not just changing lines on a map. They are weakening the voices of entire communities, undermining the promise of equal representation, and silencing people, period.

Congress must act. We must restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. We must defend fair representation. We must strengthen our democracy so that every community has equal voice and equal opportunity to be heard.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I thank the honorable and great Congresswoman GRIJALVA for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, the arch-segregationists have changed their method. They have not changed their mission. The mission has always been the same: control who votes, control who counts, control who can challenge the powerful, control the map, control the district, control the outcome, and control the future.

Crack the Black community across three districts, pack it into one so overwhelmingly it elects one Congressman where it should elect two. Dilute the vote until it is so thin it cannot quench the thirst for justice. Then stand before the cameras and say: We believe in color blindness. We believe in equal protection. I don't see race. I don't see color. We believe every vote counts the same.

A lie dressed up in the Constitution is still a lie.

Let me make the history plain to my colleagues who might have missed it or

who might have arrived late to this speech or to this subject.

After the Civil War, the 15th Amendment was passed in 1870. It said the right to vote cannot be denied on account of race. Within a decade, follow me closely, the Supreme Court in *Cruikshank*, gone; the poll tax, gone; the literacy test, gone; the Grandfather Clause, gone; the White primary, gone. Gone meaning gone from the grasp of Black citizens. Gone meaning the right existed on paper and nowhere else.

It took Jimmie Lee Jackson being shot by a State trooper in February 1965; it took John Lewis and Hosea Williams and 600 people walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on a Sunday morning in Selma, Alabama—walking peacefully, walking prayerfully, walking legally toward a courthouse to register to vote—and getting beaten with clubs, trampled by horses, gassed in the open air on American soil—broadcast on American television for the world to see—that is what it cost to get the Voting Rights Act passed.

This was paid for in blood. It was not a speech, not a court brief, not a strongly worded letter, but blood on the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a White mother from Detroit, shot dead in her car, called a Negro lover on the Alabama highway because she came to help register people to vote. She believed in America. Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner, two Jews and a Black man, buried in the Mississippi River. The four little girls—Addie Mae, Cynthia, Carole, and Denise—blown apart in their church on a Sunday morning in Birmingham. They all died so that America could vote and finally become a full democracy. They paid in full.

The question today is whether this Congress intends to honor their payment or to squander it.

I will talk to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, not at them but to them, because I believe we have something in common. Beneath the party, the discipline, and ideological positioning, there is a human being who understands that what is happening in this country now is fundamentally wrong.

I will ask them directly: What side of history do they want to be recorded on when they stood up at their town hall and talked about freedom? Were they telling the truth?

When they invoked the Founding Fathers and the Constitution, were they telling the truth? What side of history will they be on when they put their hand on their heart and they put their hand on the Bible and swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, were they telling the truth?

What side of history do they want to be recorded on? Because the Constitution includes the 14th Amendment. The Constitution includes the 15th Amendment. The Constitution includes the mandate that Congress shall have the power to enforce these amendments by

appropriate legislation. That legislation is the Voting Rights Act. To let it die, to stand here and do nothing while it is dismantled from across the street, is not constitutional conservatism. It is constitutional abandonment.

Let me say something about this word that keeps being propped up: "color blindness." They say the Constitution requires color blindness. They say that we must treat all citizens the same regardless of race. They say the Equal Protection Clause demands it, and I want to say yes, I agree. I have always agreed. Every sensible person agrees, but here is what they are leaving out.

Color blindness applied to the remedy while the disease is still active is not justice. It is called "malpractice."

You cannot break a man's legs for 200 years and then hand him a pair of crutches and say now we treat you equally before the law, no special treatment. The legs are still broken. Our democracy is still in its infancy. The crutches are the remedy and the remedy is not the problem. It is the solution.

That is why we need the Voting Rights Act and section 2 for protection.

Notice how the legislator in Tennessee right after this law was passed inaccurately went to the gravesite, went to the balcony of the Lorraine Motel where Reverend Martin Luther King was assassinated and attacked that one district, that African-American district.

When Louisiana drew two majority Black congressional districts to have equal representation, it was not creating racial inequality. The racial inequality was already there. This was the cure, written into 200 years of American history in slavery, a century of Jim Crow, separate but equal unequal laws, decades of deliberate underfunding and exclusion and redlining and deliberate disenfranchisement.

□ 2110

The district was the answer to the inequality, not the cause of it. To call the remedy unconstitutional while the disease runs free, that is not law, Mr. Speaker. That is protection of power by people who benefit from this power and this disaster of a decision.

I will recognize my colleagues who have spoken up, but the silence is deafening. For 250 years, as we celebrate our great country, a country, indeed, in progress of equal justice for all, where just 60 years ago was the starting line of democracy, 60 years ago was my birth and my timeline, and already the forces of regression and those great-grandchildren and grandchildren of the segregationists are now tearing down the guardrails that got us to a more pluralistic America.

The question has not been completed, and it is not complicated. The question is not subtle. The question is not one reasonable people can be on different sides of.

You are either for voting rights or you are against them. You are either

for democracy or you are against it. You are either standing on the side of Selma, or you are standing on the side of the men who swung the clubs on the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

There is no middle ground. There is no procedural abstention. History does not grade on a curve.

Choose your side, colleagues. History will be watching. The future is listening. The people are watching. History will not forget.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT). The gentleman has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we discuss the dismantling of voting rights and how many of my colleagues and I will continue to stand up to defend our most sacred right, I am proud to be joined by my colleagues who have stood up for the right side of history.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about what I have heard and what I have not heard from the other side. My colleagues on the other side have had a great deal to say about constitutional principles, but I have not heard a plan to protect the votes for all Americans. I have not heard them say how these congressional maps will be fair for all people. I have heard a great deal about legal frameworks, but I have not heard a single proposal to replace the protection that Callais has taken away.

I have heard about process and procedure through the proper channels, but I have not heard anyone on the other side of the aisle stand up and say in plain language that Black voters deserve full and equal representation and that this Congress will make sure that they get it. Why not? It should not be a complicated sentence.

Let me talk about the history for a moment because one of the things I have heard today is the suggestion that we are living in the past. That is not true. We are relitigating things that have already been solved. It is time to move forward. We want to go forward to make America better and to keep America strong.

Unfortunately, there is an eerie silence. There is a duplicity and a complacency, and trying to rest upon the laurels. There is something to be said by God himself about trying to turn a blind eye toward injustice. It should haunt your conscience.

Your children are watching. The future will be taking note. History shall record us all. What side of history will you stand on? Will you say anything to stand up for justice?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I thank you for your consideration.

DEBT CLOCK TICKING

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. SCHWEIKERT of Arizona was recognized until 10 p.m. as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), my friend.

HONORING DEANO'S ITALIAN

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Deano's Italian on being named the Best Italian Restaurant in the State of Georgia.

Deano's is a beloved family-owned and -operated Italian restaurant in Dublin, Georgia. This great honor highlights how a small town eatery with a deep compassion for its community can compete with restaurants in larger cities across the State.

The restaurant was evaluated on multiple criteria, such as food quality, consistency, atmosphere, and its overall dining experience. Voters noted that what made Deano's stand out was its combination of authentic Italian cuisine and southern hospitality.

The city of Dublin also believes this achievement will bring business to nearby shops, cafes, and local attractions, creating a meaningful impact on their economy.

Deano's has proven just how far commitment to customers can take you. This level of service is a great example of Georgia's growing tourism industry.

RECOGNIZING GUSSIE GAMMON'S 100TH BIRTHDAY
Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Augusta "Gussie" Gammon's 100th birthday.

Gussie has dedicated much of her life to public service and an unwavering commitment to the Republican Party.

Born on June 25, 1926, in Philadelphia, Gussie moved to Georgia in 1983, becoming a strong force within Republican politics by founding four women's Republican clubs and serving as a delegate to three Republican Presidential conventions. She also served as Glynn County campaign manager for President George H.W. Bush and Congressman Jack Kingston.

Aside from her work in politics, she founded Johnson Insurance Agency in 1969 in the Florida Keys with her late husband. Together, they raised four daughters and were blessed with eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Gussie later married Don Gammon, with whom she continues her remarkable journey.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to wish Ms. Gammon a happy 100th birthday.

HONORING DR. PAUL BROOKSHER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Paul Brooksher, who retired from the position of superintendent of Bryan County Schools this year.

Paul has faithfully worked in public education for 31 years, serving as superintendent for 14 of them. Bryan County is one of the fastest-growing school systems in Georgia, and Paul has worked tirelessly to lay the foundation necessary to support this growth through effective investment in teachers, facilities, and programs.

After he announced his retirement, his colleagues encouraged him to reconsider, a true testament to how well-