

the Congressional Black Caucus, for joining me in sponsoring this Special Order. We gather today to mark the congressional observance of Black History Month. The occasion affords us the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of African American men and women to the building and shaping of this great nation.

We gather in the House Chamber 71 years after the late Dr. Carter G. Woodson proposed the observance of Negro History Week. In 1926, Dr. Woodson understood that African Americans were not receiving proper recognition in history for their contributions. Woodson proposed setting aside one week during the month of February to commemorate the achievements of African Americans. In 1976, the observance was changed to Black History Month. Our theme for the 1997 observance of Black History Month is "African Americans and Civil Rights: A Reappraisal." I am proud to join my colleagues as we reflect upon this theme. It causes us to examine how far we have come in the struggle for civil rights.

The civil rights movement of our time set its roots in the field of education, with assistance from the United States Supreme Court. In 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court announced its ruling that segregation in the Nation's public schools was unconstitutional. A year later on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, AL, Mrs. Rosa Parks was told by the driver on the bus on which she was riding to get up and give her seat to a white man. This seamstress, who was tired from a long day's work refused this order and was arrested.

In protest, black leaders organized a boycott that lasted for 382 days. It ended with the courts ordering integration and the abolishment of a legal requirement that black people had to stand up and let white people sit down whenever both races were riding on public transportation.

The Montgomery bus boycott brought to the helm of the Civil Rights Movement a 27-year old black baptist minister whose name is forever etched in the annals of history. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi to preach a doctrine of love and nonviolence. During his lifetime, Dr. King's faith, perseverance and determination served as a symbol of the hope for equality for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, history records that on September 9, 1957, President Eisenhower signed a new Civil Rights Act which markedly enlarged the federal role in race relations. It established a Civil Rights Commission and a Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. It also gave the Attorney General authority to seek injunctions against obstruction of voting rights.

One of the most climatic point in the campaign for equality came on August 28, 1963, when over 200,000 demonstrators of all races and religious denominations assembled in Washington, DC, in the largest civil rights march in the history of this Nation. It was at that march that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

The civil rights movement of this century has passed through three phases, each one

distinct in character. The first, desegregation, was an effort to break down the barriers of an old and corrupt social order. The second phase, integration, was concentrated on the opening up of opportunities—as in the case of the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which guaranteed the right to vote, access to public accommodations, mandated non-discrimination in federal programs, and required equal employment opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we gather today to reflect upon our civil rights gain and to measure our progress. What I have outlined is a glimpse of our Nation's civil rights history. Let us turn for a moment to the challenges we face. Two of the greatest challenges to continued progress of the civil rights movement are in the areas of redistricting and affirmative action. Since its enactment over 30 years ago, the Voting Rights Act has altered the face of American government. In 1965, the south had only 72 African American elected officials; by 1976, there were 1,944. Today there are nearly 5,000—68 times as many as when the Voting Rights Act was passed. Then, on the last day of its 1993 term, the Supreme Court again lowered the boom on years of progress with its decision in *Shaw versus Reno* and *Hays versus Louisiana*, and *Johnson versus Miller* in 1995. Each of these cases called into question the constitutionality of remedial race-conscious districting. Against this backdrop, on June 13, 1996, the Supreme Court rendered two more opinions that turned back the clock on voting rights. In *Shaw versus Hunt* and *Bush versus Vera* the Court simply nullified four congressional districts held by African Americans.

Despite these setbacks, the struggle continues. My colleagues and I will continue to fight for equal opportunity and equal access for all minorities in the electoral process.

The issue of affirmative action also impacts our civil rights progress. Within the last 2 decades, affirmative action has been the primary tool that has allowed minorities and women to break through the many barriers of discrimination that have contributed to keeping them unemployed, underpaid, and in positions of limited opportunity for advancement.

Unfortunately, despite 3 decades of progress in this area, we are now faced with a new threat. We now face legislative and court initiatives that attempt to turn back the clock by attacking equal opportunity in America.

The Rehnquist Supreme Court struck down a minority set-aside program requiring Richmond, VA contractors to hire minority-owned subcontractors for 30 percent of its contracts in *City of Richmond versus J.A. Croson Co.* The Court ruled in the *Croson* case that set-asides by State and local governments were allowed only in cases of past discrimination. On June 12, 1995, the United States Supreme Court decision in *Adarand Constructors versus Pena*, established radical new standards for evaluating affirmative action programs. While the court does require "strict scrutiny" be applied to the review of affirmative action laws, the vast majority of affirmative action programs will easily survive such close examination. The court's opinion clearly acknowledges

the value of well-tailored affirmative action programs as an important tool to end discrimination.

On June 19, 1995, in response to questions raised about affirmative action, President Clinton presented a clear, unequivocal statement and plan to support and improve our Nation's efforts to promote equal opportunity and justice through the affirmative action laws of the United States. This support is particularly important because of the confusion and misinformation that is currently being circulated about the status, mission, and future of affirmative action programs.

Mr. Speaker, I take pride in joining my colleagues for this special order commemorating Black History Month. I hope that our remarks will help all Americans to remember the important contributions that African Americans have made to this Nation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 581, FAMILY PLANNING FACILITATION AND ABORTION FUNDING RESTRICTION ACT OF 1997

Mr. GOSS (during the Special Order of Mr. MAJOR R. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-3) on the resolution (H.Res. 46) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 581) to amend Public Law 104-208 to provide that the President may make funds appropriated for population planning and other population assistance available on March 1, 1997, subject to restrictions on assistance to foreign organizations that perform or actively promote abortions, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2, CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS AMENDMENT

Mr. GOSS (during the Special Order of Mr. MAJOR R. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-4) on the resolution (H.Res. 47) providing for