

The Voting Rights Act does two things: It does not allow jurisdictions to discriminate against any United States citizen that wants to exercise the most sacred of all rights, and that is the right to vote. That gives you some control over your own destiny. But it does something else. It encourages and accommodates all other United States citizens that may have some sort of obstacle to overcome in order to exercise the most precious of all rights. That is what the Voting Rights Act accomplishes.

And I am hoping that tomorrow we will have this wonderful opportunity to follow in the footsteps of those true giants in 1965 that came together on both sides of the aisle to pass the original Voting Rights Act.

PROTECT VOTER RIGHTS BY PASSING THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, the genesis of the Voting Rights Act lies in that period of American history just after the Civil War when various creative devices were put in place to prevent and dilute the impact of black voters and votes.

The 1965 act did away with many of those devices, many of which were used in my home State, devices such as full-slate voting, where in order for your vote to count, you had to vote for your choice once and against that choice for as many times as there were vacancies on the ballot, numbered posts which set up racially polarized voting, at-large voting which diluted the impact of black votes. All of these creative devices were gotten rid of with the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

But, Mr. Speaker, I used to teach history, and I always told my students that if a thing has happened before, it can happen again. And I do know that if we do not have the protection of the Voting Rights Act, we can see our States revisiting many of those creative devices.

HEAL THE WOUNDS OF RACISM BY PASSING THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this Voting Rights Act is the most important piece of legislation that has been passed in this modern time in our Congress.

As I stand here, I am reminded of the words that we used so much as we would go through the South, going up against the Bull Connors, going up against the night riders, going up against the Ku Klux Klan with the courage that was taken and that is still needed today because, unfortunately, discrimination still exists throughout this Nation in various places.

And for those who want to say, why punish the South or why punish the State, why is it that you would think of the Voting Rights Act as a punishment? The Voting Rights Act is not a punishment. It is a liberator of those who have been punished, where all they have had was to sing that song: "Sometimes I feel discouraged, feel my work's in vain; but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul. There is a balm in Gilead that makes the wounded whole."

This balm in Gilead for us today is the Voting Rights Act to heal the wounds of racism that have been inflicted on this country and that we still, unfortunately, suffer from.

Let us vote to pass this Voting Rights Act this day and this week and send a resounding message that America is for everybody, black as well as white, rich as well as poor, all of us.

THE TRAGEDY IN INDIA

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have made the case for the extension of the Voting Rights Act, and I echo their sentiments. When this matter comes to the floor, if it comes, and it should today be made in order as a rule, then I will have an opportunity to speak more in that regard.

But today I rise, in addition to asking in the world's oldest democracy that we extend the Voting Rights Act, that we recognize that on yesterday the world's largest democracy was attacked in a significant and condemnatory way.

These events seem to take place on days of the 11th, and yesterday in India, despicable acts took place by those who would take the lives of innocents. In Madrid, in London, in Bali, the same thing happened.

I do acknowledge the fact that hurriedly yesterday the foreign minister of Pakistan condemned those bombings, and I commend him in that regard.

It was said earlier and reported today in one of our newspapers that in Europe it was said after September 11, "We are all Americans now." Today, after yesterday in India, "We are all Indians now."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2990, CREDIT RATING AGENCY DUOPOLY RELIEF ACT OF 2006

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 906 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 906

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pur-

suant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2990) to improve ratings quality by fostering competition, transparency, and accountability in the credit rating agency industry. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

□ 1100

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Last night, the Rules Committee granted a structured rule for H.R. 2990, the Credit Agency Duopoly Relief Act of 2006. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule also provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read.