and racial discrimination (Section 2) against Asian American voters. The complaint alleges that Boston abridged the rights of language minority groups by:

Treating limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters disrespectfully;

Refusing to permit limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters to be assisted by an assistor of their choice;

Improperly influencing, coercing, or ignoring the ballot choices of limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters;

Failing to make available bilingual personnel to provide effectively assistance and information needed by minority language voters; and

Refusing or failing to provide provisional ballots to limited English proficient Hispanic and Asian American voters.

In San Diego County, California, voter registration among Hispanics and Filipinos rose by over 20 percent after the Department of Justice brought suit against the county to enforce the language minority provisions of Section 203. During that same period, Vietnamese registrations increased by 40 percent.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, represents our country and this Congress at its best because it matches our words to deeds, our actions to our values. And, as is usually the case, when America acts consistent with its highest values, success follows. By eliminating language assistance to American voters, the King Amendment will make it more difficult for American citizens to participate in the political process simply because English is not their primary language. The King Amendment is thus inconsistent with American values and the spirit of the Voting Rights Act. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to reject the amendment.

## MEDICARE HOME INFUSION THERAPY CONSOLIDATED COVERAGE ACT OF 2006

### HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 17, 2006*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join with my colleagues KAY GRANGER, TAMMY BALDWIN, and RANDY KUHL in introducing the Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Consolidated Coverage Act of 2006. This bill would correct long-standing gaps in Medicare coverage for home infusion therapy, and will enable thousands of beneficiaries to obtain these often life-saving therapies in the most convenient and cost-effective setting—their homes.

Under current Medicare coverage rules, beneficiaries who have severe infections, cancer, or congestive heart disease and many other diagnoses, are needlessly admitted into hospitals or nursing homes to receive the care they need. This is most unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because in many cases, infusion therapy administered in the patient's home is clearly the preferred alternative. Commercial health plans have long recognized the clinical value and cost-effectiveness of home infusion therapy, and full and proper coverage of home infusion therapy is commonplace among these payers. Medicare stands virtually alone in its antiquated coverage policies that discourage the use of a therapy that in actuality should be promoted for its cost savings, safety, clinical effectiveness, and convenience. At a time when there is a growing awareness of the need to prevent or limit inpatient hospital stays for our Nation's elderly, we believe this legislation is extremely timely.

Our bill is very simple in its approach. Currently, whatever coverage exists for home infusion therapy is divided between part B and part D. Part B coverage is based on the durable medical equipment benefit, because an item of DME—the infusion pump—is sometimes needed to administer home infusion therapy. That coverage, however, is limited to about 23 drugs. Part D, the outpatient prescription drug benefit, covers more infusion drugs than part B, but does not cover the services, supplies and equipment necessary to safely and appropriately administer these therapies in the home. As a result, both part B and part D coverage of home infusion are very limited. Under part B, Medicare beneficiaries do not have access to many of the most common infusion drugs covered by commercial health plans. Under part D, many beneficiaries have to pay for the infusion services, supplies, and equipment with out-of-pocket funds. The clear result is that access to home infusion therapy, despite its potential for cost savings and good clinical outcomes, is needlessly limited.

Our bill would consolidate coverage for home infusion therapy under part B, so that coverage would be centered in one benefit and coverage would be designed to appropriately and accurately reflect what is involved in the safe and effective provision of home infusion therapy. The Secretary of HHS would apply quality standards that are consistent with prevailing community standard of care commonly utilized by commercial health plans. Both beneficiaries and the Medicare program itself would reap the benefits of broader access to these important medical treatments in the home.

I introduced a similar bill in 2001 that would have established a home infusion therapy benefit under part B. Since then Congress enacted the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 which created the part D prescription drug benefit. While I appreciate the efforts to broaden coverage of the drug portion of home infusion therapy, the problems I have described still persist because CMS believes it does not have the authority to cover anything beyond the drugs. Thus, effective coverage of home infusion therapy has remained elusive. We can fix this now.

Along with my colleagues, I urge early consideration of this long-overdue bill.

## THANK YOU, HECTOR BARRETO, FOR A JOB WELL DONE

### HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 17, 2006*

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, last Monday was the last day in office for Hector Barreto, the second-longest serving SBA Administrator in its 53-year history. Last week, there was a reception in honor of former Administrator Barreto with a broad spectrum of the small business community in Washington in attendance. This reflected well upon Mr. Barreto and his leadership style to bring people together of diverse interests and backgrounds.

I don't know how Mr. Barreto put up with being in Washington for these past 5 years. I'm proud to be associated with Mr. Barreto and where he has taken the SBA to serve more small businesses than ever before in the history of the agency. I'm also proud to say that Mr. Barreto and I have similar backgrounds, growing up in the family restaurant business in the Midwest.

It's amazing to see what has happened during the tenure of Mr. Barreto as Administrator of the SBA. Mr. Barreto was confirmed by the Senate and then sworn into office on July 25, 2001. Several weeks later, our Nation was hit by the awful terrorist attacks on September 11. More Americans were killed in 9/11 than at Pearl Harbor. Mr. Barreto was just getting used to his new job responsibilities and this terrible tragedy struck America. Administrator Barreto rose up to the challenge by extending Economic Injury Disaster loans to small businesses all across America regardless of their proximity to the locations of the actual terrorist attacks. The terrorists sought to devastate our economy by tearing down the World Trade Center and disrupting air travel but they did not count on the resiliency of the small business sector and the American people. More than 10,000 small businesses across the Nation employing 166,000 workers were helped with over $1 billion in 9/11 SBA disaster loans.

If that wasn't enough, Mr. Barreto achieved great results in other programs of the SBA. Between 2000 and 2005, the SBA more than doubled the number of loans made through its main business loan guarantee programs. The dollar volume also dramatically increased—in 7(a) by nearly 40 percent and in the 504 program by threefold. And after a series of programmatic shut-downs and curtailments, I joined with Mr. Barreto in making the historic decision in late 2004 to finally get the 7(a) program off the rollercoaster of the appropriations process and have it funded entirely through user fees just like the 504 and the SBIC program. Now, the 7(a) program is going like gangbusters, serving record numbers ,of small businesses throughout all demographic groups, as compared to when it was receiving a loan subsidy.

There has also been a steady increase in the number of individuals receiving technical assistance, education, and counseling through the SBA and its resource partners. Also, as a result of active engagement between the SBA and Federal agencies, Federal procurement dollars going to small businesses are at an all-time high. All this was accomplished while transforming the SBA into an agency to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Change is hard but Mr. Barreto made the courageous decision to have the SBA operate more like the private sector than a bureaucracy. Doing more with less should be praised. not condemned, particularly in this tough budget environment.

Then, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita. and Wilma violently struck the gulf coast last year. It was as if a swath of complete devastation 100 miles wide ripped through our country from Boston to Chicago. Again. Administrator Barreto and his team in the Office of Disaster Assistance came through despite enormous obstacles placed in their path, including not being able to really get to the areas of deepest destruction until well after a month after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans. The SBA and Administrator Barreto in particular took many below-the-belt political potshots

along the way. I know when a person's integrity has been unfairly questioned, and I had to stand up to defend a decent and honorable man. I was proud to stand with Mr. Barreto last December in the press conference to put some context and additional facts into a very complicated situation.

Just as a side note, it is very interesting to me that the media is not reporting that the SBA thus far has approved a record amount of over $10 billion in disaster loans to more than 152,000 Gulf States residents, representing an accomplishment 2½ times greater than the Nation's previous largest disaster—and all done at a faster pace. That is something to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this brief opportunity to once again thank Mr. Barreto for his leadership; for his friendship; and for his service to our country. Our Nation's small business community is better for Mr. Barreto's tenure as the second longest serving SBA Administrator in history. The new SBA Administrator, Steve Preston, has some fairly big shoes to fill.

Freda and I wish Hector Barreto and his family all the best in his new endeavor as the new national chairman of the Latino Coalition. I am confident that Mr. Barreto will never forget his small business roots.

## FANNIE LOU HAMER, ROSA PARKS, AND CORETTA SCOTT KING VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 13, 2006*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, speaking of the Emancipation Proclamation, Martin Luther King declared that: "This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity." I say to you today that the Voting Rights Act, like the Emancipation Proclamation that preceded it a century before, was also a momentous decree which came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Americans who for decades had been subjected to the withering injustice of racial discrimination and electoral disenfranchisement.

The Gohmert amendment seeks to diminish the light of continued hope offered by the VRA. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is no ordinary piece of legislation. For millions of Americans and myself, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary yet heroic Americans who showed the world it was possible to transform their society by having the courage to defy entrenched and systematic racial discrimination and disenfranchisement.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, which we MUST vote to reauthorize today was enacted to remedy a history of systemic and widespread discrimination in certain areas of the country. Presented with a record of systematic defiance by certain States and jurisdictions that could not be overcome by litigation, this Congress—led by President Lyndon Johnson, from my own home state of Texas—took the steps necessary to stop it. It is instructive to recall the words of President Johnson when he proposed the Voting Rights Act to the Congress in 1965:

> Rarely are we met with a challenge . . . to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation. The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such as an issue . . . the command of the Constitution is plain. It is wrong—deadly wrong—to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 represents our country and this Congress at its best because it matches our words to our deeds, our actions to our values. Martin Luther King said that, "When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. . . . It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. . . . But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt."

Fortunately, this country has come a long way in the past four decades since the assassination of Dr. King. However, as the massive voting irregularities that occurred in 2000 and 2004 clearly illustrate, we have not come far enough. That is why we must defeat the Gohmert Amendment which seeks to reduce the reauthorization period for the VRA from 25 years to 10 years.

The considerable evidence presented in 10 hearings in the Judiciary Committee demonstrate clearly that the level and patterns of discrimination and electoral disenfranchisement present today are extremely unlikely to be eradicated in 10 years. Moreover, if covered jurisdictions want to bail out of provisions of the VRA, they can.

In the past, when Congress reauthorized the VRA for short periods of time, it created an incentive for covered jurisdictions to wait out their obligations rather than comply, thus contributing to the widespread non-compliance with the statute that occurred throughout the 1970s. A 10 year renewal of the VRA would be inadequate. In order for Congress to assess whether a pattern of discriminatory conduct remains, it must be able to review voting changes through multiple redistricting cycles. The three years following the decennial Census are a time of the highest volume of voting changes and the greatest opportunity for discrimination. Accordingly, we must maintain the 25 year renewal period.

Furthermore, if we observe Congressional history, our own experience with the renewal of the VRA demonstrates a pattern of lengthening the period of coverage due to the level of entrenchment and intractability of voting discrimination. Given the extensive investment of Congressional resources expended by the Judiciary Committee in compiling and considering the detailed record necessary for reauthorization, reenacting the VRA for only 10 years is inefficient and unacceptable.

Without exaggeration, the Voting Rights Act has been one of the most effective civil rights laws passed by Congress. In 1964, there were only approximately 300 African-Americans in public office, including just three in Congress. Few, if any, black elected officials were elected anywhere in the South. Today there are more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 43 members of Congress, the largest number ever. The act has opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Latino public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including 263 at the state or federal level, 27 of whom serve in Congress. Native Americans, Asians and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

I hail from the great State of Texas, the Lone Star State. A state that, sadly, had one of the most egregious records of voting discrimination against racial and language minorities. Texas is one of the Voting Rights Act's "covered jurisdictions." In all of its history, I am only one of three African-American woman from Texas to serve in the Congress of the United States, and one of only two to sit on this famed Committee. I hold the seat once held by the late Barbara Jordan, who won her seat thanks to the Voting Rights Act. From her perch on this committee, Barbara Jordan once said:

> I believe hyperbole would not be fictional and would not overstate the solemness that I feel right now. My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total.

I sit here today an heir of the Civil Rights Movement, a beneficiary of the Voting Rights Act. My faith in the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act too is whole, it is complete, it is total. I would be breaking faith with those who risked all and gave all to secure for my generation the right to vote if I did not do all I can to strengthen the Voting Rights Act so that it will forever keep open doors that shut out so many for so long.

Consequently, we must honor the legacies of those who sacrificed their lives so that we may be able to exercise our constitutionally protected right to vote by renewing the Voting Rights Act for 25 more years.

## PAYING TRIBUTE TO KATHY AUGUSTINE

### HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 17, 2006*

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Kathy Augustine, a dedicated Nevada leader, who passed away on Tuesday, July 11, 2006.

Kathy was a devoted and passionate public servant, having served in the Nevada State Assembly from 1993 to 1995, and also in the State Senate from 1995 to 1999, where she chaired the Legislative Affairs and Operations Committee and was Vice Chairman of Taxation and the Human Resources and Facilities Committees. In 1999, Kathy became the first woman to be elected as Nevada State Controller. To add to her impressive résumé, Kathy was also a Trustee for the Center for Governmental Financial Management, and the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers, and Treasurers' representative on the Electronic Benefits and Services Council, where she served as Chair of the Strategic