sponsor of this bipartisan legislation, which ensures every American citizen has the right to vote.

If the Constitution is the embodiment of America's ideal of equality, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a historic milestone in our pursuit of that ideal. The namesakes of this legislation are among the tens of thousands of common heroes who fought, sacrificed and even perished to abolish the institutional barriers to voting that cast a shadow on American freedom for nearly 200 years. It is the responsibility of our generation to honor their legacy of vision and commitment through our diligent stewardship of their hard-won victories. Today, as America's elected representatives, we in Congress must renew our dedication to advance the cause of freedom by reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act.

Enacted in 1965 and renewed in 1982, the Voting Rights Act (VRA) prohibits the use of any voting practice or procedure that discriminates based on race and requires certain jurisdictions to provide language assistance to minority citizens. The Act bars literacy tests, poll taxes, intimidation, threats, violence and other transparent assaults on liberty. It also protects against insidious procedural barriers such as restrictive voter registration requirements, districting plans that dilute minority voting strength, discriminatory annexations and the siting of polling places at inaccessible locations.

The Department of Justice has called the Voting Rights Act ''the most successful piece of civil rights legislation ever adopted.'' As a result of the Act in Mississippi, African American registration went from less than 10 percent in 1964 to almost 60 percent in 1968. In Alabama, registration rose from 24 percent to 57 percent. These immediate gains in access to the polls sowed seeds of equal representation that future generations would reap.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there were approximately 300 African Americans serving in public office across the country in 1964, including only three in Congress. Today, more than 9,100 African Americans hold elected office at the local and state level, including 43 in Congress. The guarantees of full political participation codified in the VRA have greatly benefited all minority groups including Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans—the last group to win the right to vote. This impressive record of progress argues strongly for reauthorization of the Act.

While most provisions of the VRA are permanent, several key provisions of the law are set to expire in 2007. These provisions include Section 5, which requires covered jurisdictions to obtain approval or ''pre-clearance'' from the U.S. Department of Justice before they can change voting practices or procedures. Section 203 of the Act requires election officials to provide written and oral assistance to certain citizens with limited English proficiency. Also due for reauthorization are Sections 6–9, which empower the U.S. Attorney General to appoint examiners and send Federal observers to monitor elections when evidence exists of voter intimidation at the polls.

This bipartisan reauthorization bill restores the original intent of the VRA by making it clear that any voting rule changes motivated by intentional and purposeful discrimination cannot be ''precleared'' by a Federal court or the Department of Justice. And H.R. 9 modernizes the VRA by requiring the use of the most updated census data and by directing the GAO to determine ways to better administer election assistance to non-English speakers.

Despite broad bipartisan support within the Congress for reauthorization, some Members question whether the VRA's protections are still necessary in today's America. Regrettably, almost 40 years after enactment of the VRA, voting discrimination is not only a painful memory of our past but also a persistent challenge for the present and future. Since the VRA was last reauthorized in 1982, the Department of Justice and disfranchised voters have brought hundreds of intentional voter discrimination cases before the courts, many within the last 5 years.

In 2001, the mayor and all-white Board of Aldermen of Kilmichael, Mississippi canceled local elections when it appeared several African-American candidates might win seats. Elections were finally held in 2003, after the Department of Justice used the VRA to intervene. In the election that followed, the town elected three African-American board members and their first African-American mayor.

South Dakota enacted a redistricting plan in 2001 that ''packed,'' or over-concentrated Native Americans into a district, preventing them from creating a majority voting bloc in an additional, neighboring district. Three years later, a Federal court invalidated the state's plan, finding ''substantial evidence'' that state officials excluded Native Americans from voting and holding office.

Local officials in Bexar County, Texas attempted to undermine Latino voting strength in a 2003 special election by neglecting to site polling places near those communities. Using the special provisions of the VRA, Latino advocates were able to prevent Latino voters from being silenced in the election by obtaining expedited assistance from the local district court.

And not all voting irregularities are local. The mere mention of ''Florida'' or ''Ohio'' evoke the voting controversies of the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections, which called the legitimacy of the outcomes into question and shook Americans' confidence in our elections process. The effort to reestablish confidence in the elections process has produced new controversies over electronic voting machines that leave no paper record for verification and recounts.

Clearly, the voting discrimination and irregularities that inspired the Voting Rights Act persist and serve to remind us that the right to vote cannot be taken for granted, but it must be actively protected and defended. By passing H.R. 9 and reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, Congress reinforces the foundations of American democracy and keeps faith with generations of Americans past and future. I urge my colleagues to reject all attempts to weaken the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act (H.R. 9) and to support the bipartisan compromise before us today.

SUPPORT THE STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT, H.R. 810

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I support moving stem cell research forward and believe H.R. 810 will accomplish it in an ethical and responsible manner.

It is almost 2 years since my daughter-in-law, Naomi, underwent a kidney transplant. I marvel at the combined results of the many people and years of science and research that came before her which gave her that opportunity .

Naomi was lucky and found an eligible donor in her brother. The transplant operation was a success. In fact, just a month ago, our family cheered on Naomi at the Transplant Olympics.

It seems like a happy ending, but the story does not end here.

My daughter-in-law takes a number of drugs to keep her body from rejecting her new kidney. I hope her body will be able to support her transplant for many years.

Hopefully, Naomi will not need to face another transplant for many, many years. Clearly, she may not be able to go to a sibling again.

Will new research bring her new hope in the future?

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I have a personal reason for seeing an expansion of the existing stem cell lines.

New stem cell lines hold the promise of advancing medical research and providing cures to a number of diseases.

After years of work, both the House and Senate passed bipartisan stem cell legislation. Unfortunately, President Bush vetoed this critical bill. Despite a valiant effort in the House, we could not override this veto.

We need to think about tomorrow—what kind of future do we want to provide for the millions of individuals who live with life-threatening illnesses and their families?

If we don't move forward, we will not have the chance to develop innovative treatments, including the potential of growing kidneys.

I hope I can give Naomi and other families like ours that chance.

REGARDING THE GATES FOUNDATION'S WORK TO DEVELOP AN HIV VACCINE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, AIDS is a disease that knows no national borders. Approximately 40 million people across the globe are infected with this virus. There is no cure, and for many people, no hope.

Between 1995 and 2005, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS has doubled, despite efforts to prevent transmission of the disease. New infections among women outpace those among men as a result of gender inequalities and violence toward women. Ninety-

six percent of people with HIV live in the developing world, most in sub-Saharan Africa.

Life-saving drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus have been unavailable, and hundreds of thousands of infants have become needlessly infected at birth or through breastfeeding in the last year.

Bill and Melinda Gates have done a great thing to provide hope to the millions suffering from AIDS.

Yesterday, they announced that they have dedicated $287 million in the form of 16 grants over 5 years to set up an international network of HIV vaccine scientists.

What is special about the grants is that they will be shared among 16 research projects in 19 countries. Five of the grants will pay for central laboratories to test researchers' findings and foster international collaboration.

Importantly, the Gates Foundation's gift will encourage the 165 scientists receiving them to join forces. All the scientists involved have signed a collaboration agreement to openly share their data and results. This unique arrangement is designed to get an effective HIV vaccine quickly into clinical trials in humans.

I have great respect for Bill and Melinda Gates, and I admire their desire to do good things at a global level. They are a model of charity. By this generous gift, the Gates are showing all of us how to look beyond our own borders and make a real difference in this world. Global health and equality are the true keys to bringing about world peace and understanding.

HONORING DOROTHY BARKER OF CWA

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of my long-time friends, Dorothy Barker. Though not a native Houstonian, she has been here longer than most. She came here in 1939 and is a proud graduate of Milby High School.

Dorothy immediately went to work after graduation and moved around Texas with her husband, U.S. Army Air Force Sergeant Hugh Barker. In addition to being the mother of three children, Dorothy managed to have a variety of jobs to help support her family. She had a milk route in San Antonio, drove a city bus in Galveston, and was a "motor pool" employee at the Air Base in Dalhart, Texas.

Finally, her family settled down in Houston and she became an employee of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in 1945 and joined the Communication Workers of America the same year. In 2 short years, she became a job steward and became a chief steward in 1962.

She was elected associate treasurer in 1972, which is when I met her and she has held that position ever since.

Dorothy helped bring the CWA into the State of Montana in 1970 and I know personally, she has worked tirelessly to help increase union membership, protect labor rights, and get those of us who believe in good wages and benefits elected to office.

Dorothy helped me the first time I ran for State representative and was elected in 1972. She has been a strong supporter ever since and I appreciate working with her over the last 32 years.

She has attended all the formal training schools offered by CWA. She has attended steward's training, local officer training schools, leadership and advanced leadership schools, and the AFL–CIO labor law and advanced labor law courses.

Her commitment to the CWA can never be questioned. She has served as a leader in all phases of local organizing drives, and all legislative and community service work. She has been a delegate to the last 18 CWA conventions and a delegate to the AFL–CIO Convention annually since 1976.

She was District 12 CWA Woman of the Year in 1981 and was CWA Woman of the Year for local 6222 in 1999.

She currently serves as local 6222 coordinating officer for the legislative committee, finance committee, election committee, and public relations committee.

She is vice-president of the Harris County AFL–CIO and chair of the trustees of the State AFL–CIO.

I thank Dorothy Barker for her service to the working people in the Houston area and in Texas over the last 60 years and congratulate her on her retirement.

TRIBUTE TO UNITED STATES MARINE CORPORAL PAUL NICHOLAS KING

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true hero, Marine Cpl Paul Nicholas "Nick" King, who gave his life in service to our country.

Corporal King was a resident of a community in my district, Tyngsboro, and was deployed with the brave men and women serving in our Armed Forces as part of Operation: Iraqi Freedom II. Nick arrived in Iraq just a few months ago and served as a mortarman with the 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Weapons Company, Regimental Combat Team 5. On Sunday, June 25, 2006, he sustained fatal injuries when his unit was attacked as they patrolled Fallujah, Iraq.

Nick was just 23 years old when he was killed. He leaves behind his beloved wife Becky who was his high school sweetheart. He is also survived by his loving parents Paul and Julie, and his siblings, Julie, Dianna, and Daniel. He was looking forward to starting a family with his wife and finding a new home upon his return. He was also planning to restore a motorcycle that the couple had bought shortly before his deployment. His friends and family recall his zest for life as well as his courage and sense of duty. Although he was safely stationed with a support unit in Korea, Japan, and Thailand, Nick volunteered for deployment to Iraq because he wanted to fight alongside his fellow Marines. He loved being a Marine and his courage will not be soon forgotten.

Nick graduated from the Greater Lowell Vocational High School in 2001. He enlisted in the Marines during his final year in school and wore his uniform to his wife's senior prom. Nick was very proud to be a Marine.

Nick's family is proud of him for the supreme sacrifice he paid on behalf of his country. He will always be remembered for his kindness, his zest for life, his courage, and his love for his family. He will be sorely missed.

I have requested that an American flag be flown over our United States Capitol in memory of Cpl Paul Nicholas King to honor his brave service to our country. This flag was recently presented to his family. Nick died fighting for the country he loved, alongside comrades he respected and with the family he adored, forever in his heart. Our Nation is humbled and grateful for his sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, we should all take a moment to recognize Cpl Paul Nicholas King, United States Marine Corps, who gave his life in service to his country.

STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 109–127)

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, and in support of overturning the President's veto of this legislation. Unfortunately, what should be a debate about promising new research and technology that could lead to cures and treatments for countless diseases and disorders has been overshadowed, yet again, by a debate about when life begins.

These stem cells do not come from fetuses as some people mistakenly believe. They are blastocysts, 3- to 5-day-old embryos made up of so small a number of cells they can fit on a head of a pin. This legislation does not allow these embryos to be cloned or created for stem cell research. Therefore, there is no risk of rogue scientists performing illegal or unethical experiments.

In addition, the authors of H.R. 810 have taken all precautions to ensure that safeguards are in place for the ethical use of embryonic stem cells. The only embryos permitted to be used under H.R. 810 are those that will come from in vitro fertilization, IVF, donors who no longer plan on using the embryos and who provide their written consent.

Every year hundreds of thousands of leftover embryos from IVF are thrown away. Instead of tossing them in the trash, why shouldn't the owners of the embryos be able to give their consent to have these embryos used for research? We should not be denying their right to help save lives.

Those of us who support embryonic stem cell research unfortunately will not be able to overturn the President's veto. We, however, must not give up. To all Americans who support saving lives, who want to cure diseases and disorders that are plaguing their loved ones, and who care about groundbreaking ethical health research, I ask you to take this issue to your elected Representative and tell them that you demand this legislation become law in the next Congress.