

has been introduced that require voters to show a photo ID. States from Virginia to New Mexico have considered bills that would make voter registration more difficult. And from Arizona to Tennessee, States have taken steps to limit early voting.

Unfortunately, this plague of restrictive voting efforts has hit my State of Wisconsin as well. In 2011, our legislature passed a law that would limit the fundamental rights Wisconsinites have to vote. Not only would this law require a photo ID; it also took steps to disenfranchise senior citizens and college students, reduce registration opportunities, and restrict the ability of citizens to receive absentee ballots.

But Wisconsin has something that other States do not possess—a guaranteed right to vote. Article III, section 1, of the Wisconsin Constitution specifically states:

Every United States citizen age 18 or older who is a resident of an election district in this State is a qualified elector of that district.

This one sentence makes a huge difference for Wisconsinites. In two separate cases challenging the Wisconsin voter ID law, the Wisconsin circuit courts have ruled that these restrictive, burdensome voting laws are unconstitutional because, from the decision in NAACP of Milwaukee v. Walker:

The Wisconsin Constitution expressly guarantees the right to vote.

But this isn't enough. Not all States have this right. Our friends in Indiana, as we have seen, have little recourse if a restrictive voting law is signed into law.

Now more than ever, we need to be protecting our right to vote, not restricting it. We need to reaffirm our founding principle that our country is at its strongest when everyone participates. We need to guarantee a right to vote for everyone.

So this week, along with my friend and colleague, Congressman KEITH ELLISON from Minnesota, I introduced a right-to-vote amendment to the Constitution that will explicitly guarantee, without a doubt, the right of the American people to vote. The amendment is as simple as it is necessary: every American citizen possesses the fundamental right to vote in every public election where they reside, and Congress has the right and power to protect it.

No more will Americans have to prove their right to vote has been infringed. Instead, the burden of proof will be left to States to demonstrate that any efforts they take will not deny or abridge the fundamental right to vote.

Now, I know there are some out there who will say that an amendment to the Constitution is unrealistic; it's too hard to achieve. Those critics are shortsighted. This is about engaging my colleagues in Congress on both sides of the aisle and the American public in a movement to ensure our

right to vote is not at the mercy of those acting with partisan motives. The right to vote is not a Democratic right, nor is it a Republican right. It is an American right, and it is fundamental to a government for the people, by the people.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join on and protect our most fundamental right.

HONORING JACOBY DICKENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of America's most prominent African American businessmen and financiers. Mr. Jacoby Dickens was born and grew up in Panama City, Florida, one of six children in a low-income family.

The family moved to the south side of Chicago when Mr. Dickens was a teenager. He attended Wendell Phillips High School. After school he worked as a building engineer, saved his money, and began investing in real estate. He eventually purchased and managed a large number of apartment buildings before selling them in 1971.

After investing in several bowling alleys in the Chicago area, he was asked to join the board of Seaway Bank in 1979. In 1983, he became chairman of the board and remained until his death earlier this year. Under his guidance and leadership, Seaway Bank and Trust Company became the largest Black-owned bank in Chicago with assets of \$547 million.

Mr. Dickens was a great civic activist and contributor to public causes. He served on the boards of Chicago State University, the School of Business at Florida A&M University, and the Chicago Urban League. He donated more than \$1 million to Chicago State University's athletic center, which bears his name. He was a trustee at the Museum of Science and Industry and DePaul University, where a scholarship and loan program are named for him. In the 1980s, he was a key supporter and fundraiser for Harold Washington, who was elected the first African American mayor of Chicago.

Jacoby Dickens was a man of vision, courage, and determination. He used his wisdom, business acumen, and money wisely, not only for himself and his family, but also for the uplifting of humanity. My condolences and well wishes go out to his wife, Ms. Veranda Dickens, their family, and all of the trustees and employees of Seaway Bank and Trust Company.

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Mr. Dickens was, indeed, a man for the times and the seasons in which he lived. His bank gave loans in depressed communities and neighborhoods where people were hard-pressed to find re-

sources. He will be sorely missed and always remembered.

POVERTY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, as the cofounder of the Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus and chair of the Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty and Opportunity, I rise today to continue talking about the ongoing crisis of poverty and the impact of sequester.

We are well aware of the impact the sequester is having on many, many communities across the country in terms of devastating some of the basic social safety networks that we have all benefited from in many, many ways. They're really very, very harmful to our most vulnerable.

Nearly 50 million Americans, including 16 million children all across our country and in every congressional district, are living in poverty. Yet the sequester continues to have devastating impacts on access to childhood education, affordable housing, hot meals for low-income seniors, Head Start, and countless other programs that help low-income and vulnerable Americans.

But, Madam Speaker, these draconian cuts are not enough for some of my colleagues, given what took place last night at the Ag Committee. Last night, the Ag Committee passed a \$20 billion cut to our Nation's first line of defense against hunger in the farm bill. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the Food Stamp program, is really a vital lifeline for millions of Americans.

As a young, single mother, I relied on food stamps and public assistance during a very difficult period in my life. Let me tell you, no one—no one—wants to be on food stamps, but it is a bridge over troubled water. And so I am, quite frankly, appalled and very sad to see my colleagues attacking the integrity of such essential programs for families that need a helping hand during difficult times.

As we work to create, hopefully, a balanced reauthorization of the farm bill, we must keep in mind the people, the families, and businesses impacted by these proposed cuts.

Nearly half of all SNAP recipients are children. One in five children in America are at risk of hunger, and we know that nearly half of all children in America will be on SNAP benefits sometime during their childhood. That's half of all children in America.

Not only does SNAP help put food on the table for struggling families, every \$1 increase in SNAP benefits generates \$1.70 in economic activity. Yet, if the farm bill becomes law, more than 2 million families will be cut off from this economic lifeline.

With unemployment still at 7.5 percent—and in some communities it's over 13 percent—and the rate of poverty at 15 percent—again, some communities, it's 27 to 30 percent—ongoing