

[Rollcall Vote No. 143 Leg.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Ernst	Murphy
Ayotte	Feinstein	Murray
Baldwin	Fischer	Nelson
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Bennet	Franken	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gardner	Peters
Blunt	Gillibrand	Portman
Booker	Graham	Reed
Boozman	Grassley	Reid
Boxer	Hatch	Risch
Brown	Heinrich	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cantwell	Heller	Rubio
Capito	Hirono	Sasse
Cardin	Hoeben	Schatz
Carper	Inhofe	Schumer
Casey	Isakson	Shaheen
Cassidy	King	Shelby
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Lankford	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Lee	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Toomey
Cotton	Markey	Udall
Crapo	McCain	Vitter
Cruz	McCaskill	Warren
Daines	McConnell	Whitehouse
Donnelly	Menendez	Wicker
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Enzi	Moran	

NOT VOTING—11

Coons	Mikulski	Sessions
Johnson	Murkowski	Sullivan
Kaine	Sanders	Warner
Kirk	Scott	

The bill (H.R. 5985) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last year our country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most important pieces of legislation that was passed in the 20th century. It opened the door for millions of Americans to exercise their constitutional right to vote. But this year will mark the first Presidential election in half a century without the full protections guaranteed by that landmark law. One of the worst decisions this corporate-dominated Supreme Court made was *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down a key part of the law, taking the teeth out of provisions that protect voters from suppression laws.

Since that misguided decision, States across the country have passed new voting restrictions that would disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Americans. At least 17 States have passed new voting restrictions since the *Shelby County* restriction. We

know who is hurt most by these laws—African Americans, Latinos, young people, and seniors.

In North Carolina, before enacting one of these laws, the State legislature specifically asked for data on voting patterns by race. Once they had this data, they decided to eliminate or limit the voting methods used by African-American voters. Thankfully, the Fourth Circuit Court struck down this blatant attempt to disenfranchise one group of voters, writing: “The new provisions target African Americans with almost surgical precision.”

In my State of Ohio, the courts have shamefully allowed laws such as these to stay on the books. Last week we were dealt multiple blows.

First, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal on the Sixth Circuit’s decision ending “Golden Week”—created by a Republican legislature a decade ago—when voters can register and vote on the same day during the 1 week early-voting period. In May, Judge Watson—a George W. Bush appointee in the Southern District in Columbus—found that the laws limiting early voting and registration would disproportionately impact African Americans. Judge Watson did the right thing, but the ultraconservative Sixth Circuit ruled to overturn that ruling, ending “Golden Week.” Last week the Supreme Court nodded 4 to 4 because the Republican majority leader won’t let the Senate do its job to have hearings and confirmation on Judge Garland. The Supreme Court declined to intervene.

Then the Sixth Circuit overturned a lower court ruling that had thrown out new Ohio laws imposing stricter requirements on absentee and provisional voters. Judge Damon Keith’s dissent in this case captured what these restrictions are really all about. He notes that during the committee debate over the law, one legislator asked: “Should we really be making it easier for those people who take the bus after church on Sunday to vote?”—making it crystal clear exactly what they were targeting and whom they were targeting.

Judge Keith continues:

Democracies die behind closed doors.

Voting is the ultimate expression of self-government. Instead of making it easier for all persons, unrestrained and unfettered, to exercise this fundamental right to vote, legislators are making it harder.

States are audaciously nullifying a right for which our ancestors relentlessly fought and—in some instances—even tragically died.

I would point out that only about a decade ago, this body and the House overwhelmingly, bipartisanly renewed the Voting Rights Act that the Court struck down. Now one political party is digging in in opposition to that. It is no secret what these laws are about. State legislators have made it perfectly clear.

In 2008, African Americans voted early in person at a rate more than 20 times greater than White voters. We all remember the scenes from Cuyahoga

County, Cleveland, in 2004 when some voters waited as long as 7 hours to vote. For hourly workers, college students who work a third shift, parents who have to drop their children off at school, and many others, early voting ensures that their voices will be heard. In 2012, 10 percent of the electorate—600,000 people—voted early in my State. That is 600,000 voices that might not have been heard were it not for early voting. But some judges who dress in suits and lead very privileged lives with generous benefits from taxpayers have decided these voices aren’t worth hearing. As Judge Keith said, democracies die behind closed doors. This body refuses to hold a hearing on the nominee who would have allowed the Supreme Court to hear the appeal on the “Golden Week” issue and issue a real decision.

This body refuses to bring to the floor the bipartisan Voting Rights Advancement Act.

In 1981, when signing an extension to the Voting Rights Act, President Reagan called the right to vote “the crown jewel of American liberties.” Ronald Reagan would have seen his political party today going in exactly the opposite direction, and that is sad.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SEAMAN 1ST CLASS WILLIAM WELCH

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise to honor Seaman 1st Class William W. Welch, a native of Springfield, OH—an American hero who laid down his life for our country during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Seaman Welch was known to his family as Billy. He enlisted in the Navy, as so many did in those days, at 17. He left during his senior year at Springfield Catholic Central High School, so determined was he to serve his country. On December 7, 1941, Welch was stationed on the USS *Oklahoma*, docked at the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. The *Oklahoma* was the first to be hit that fateful morning by the Japanese.

Of the more than 1,300 crew aboard, 429 perished that day—a loss of life second only to the better known USS *Arizona*. The ship capsized, and Billy Welch was among the first of so many Americans to make the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation during World War II. Billy’s grieving family was dealt an additional blow when their son’s remains were not returned to them, and they were unable to give him a burial befitting his sacrifice.

It wasn’t until 1943 that the Navy was able to right the *Oklahoma* and began trying to identify the remains. By then, with the technology available in the 1940s, it was too late for most sailors. Billy and his fellow sailors were buried as “unknowns,” and they had rested in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu until last year.

In 2014, Billy Welch’s nephew, Michael, contacted my office. He was