

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING THE 53RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today not just to commemorate the landmark achievement of 53 years ago but to inform our colleagues and the nation of the need to redouble and rededicate our efforts to the work that remains to be done to protect the right of all Americans to vote free from discrimination and the injustices that prevent them from exercising this most fundamental right of citizenship.

On August 6, 1965, in the Rotunda of the Capitol and in the presence of such luminaries as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Foreman of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; Senators Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Everett Dirksen; President Johnson addressed the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act:

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was critical to preventing brazen voter discrimination violations that historically left millions of African Americans disenfranchised.

In 1940, for example, there were less than 30,000 African Americans registered to vote in Texas and only about 3 percent of African Americans living in the South were registered to vote.

Poll taxes, literacy tests, and threats of violence were the major causes of these racially discriminatory results.

After passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which prohibited these discriminatory practices, registration and electoral participation steadily increased to the point that by 2012, more than 1.2 million African Americans living in Texas were registered to vote.

In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were approximately 300 African-Americans in public office, including just three in Congress.

Few, if any, African Americans held elective office anywhere in the South.

Because of the Voting Rights Act, today there are more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever.

Because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on this day 53 years ago, I stand before you as the first African American woman Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee

on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.

Mr. Speaker, the Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Hispanic public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including more than 275 at the state or federal level, 32 of whom serve in Congress.

Native Americans, Asians and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

The crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is Section 5, which requires that states and localities with a chronic record of discrimination in voting practices secure federal approval before making any changes to voting processes.

Section 5 protects minority voting rights where voter discrimination has historically been the worst.

Since 1982, Section 5 has stopped more than 1,000 discriminatory voting changes in their tracks, including 107 discriminatory changes right here in Texas.

And it is a source of eternal pride to all of us in Houston that in pursuit of extending the full measure of citizenship to all Americans, in 1975 Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who also represented this historic 18th Congressional District of Texas, introduced, and the Congress adopted, what are now Sections 4(f)(3) and 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act, which extended the protections of Section 4(a) and Section 5 to language minorities.

During the floor debate on the 1975 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, Congresswoman Jordan explained why this reform was needed:

There are Mexican-American people in the State of Texas who have been denied the right to vote; who have been impeded in their efforts to register and vote; who have not had encouragement from those election officials because they are brown people.

So, the state of Texas, if we approve this measure, would be brought within the coverage of this Act for the first time.

When it comes to extending and protecting the precious right vote, the Lone Star State—the home state of Lyndon Johnson and Barbara Jordan—can be the leading state in the Union, one that sets the example for the nation.

But to realize that future, we must turn from and not return to the dark days of the past.

We must remain ever vigilant and oppose all schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today to remind the nation that the right to vote—that “powerful instrument that can break down the walls of injustice”—is facing grave threats.

The threat stems from the decision issued in June 2013 by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 193 (2013), which invalidated Section 4(b) of the VRA, and paralyzed the application of the VRA’s Section 5 preclearance requirements.

According to the Supreme Court majority, the reason for striking down Section 4(b) was that “times change.”

Now, the Court was right; times have changed.

But what the Court did not fully appreciate is that the positive changes it cited are due almost entirely to the existence and vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

And that is why the Voting Rights Act is still needed.

Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but did not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymieing the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did eliminate them entirely.

The Voting Rights Act is needed as much today to prevent another epidemic of voting disenfranchisement as Dr. Salk’s vaccine is still needed to prevent another polio epidemic.

However, officials in some states, notably Texas and North Carolina, seemed to regard the Shelby decision as a green light and rushed to implement election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

My constituents remember very well the Voter ID law passed in Texas in 2011, which required every registered voter to present a valid government-issued photo ID on the day of polling in order to vote.

The Justice Department blocked the law in March of 2012, and it was Section 5 that prohibited it from going into effect.

At least it did until the Shelby decision, because on the very same day that Shelby was decided officials in Texas announced they would immediately implement the Photo ID law, and other election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

The Texas Photo ID law was challenged in federal court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the decision of U.S. District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos that Texas’ strict voter identification law discriminated against blacks and Hispanics and violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, protecting voting rights and combating voter suppression schemes are two of the critical challenges facing our great democracy.

Without safeguards to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the polls, more injustices are likely to occur and the voices of millions silenced.

Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes.

Consider the demographic groups who lack a government issued ID:

1. African Americans: 25 percent.
2. Asian Americans: 20 percent.
3. Hispanic Americans: 19 percent.
4. Young people, aged 18–24: 18 percent.
5. Persons with incomes less than \$35,000: 15 percent.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

And there are other ways abridging or suppressing the right to vote, including:

1. Curtailing or eliminating early voting.
2. Ending same-day registration.
3. Not counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not count.
4. Eliminating adolescent pre-registration.
5. Shortening poll hours.
6. Lessening the standards governing voter challenges thus allowing self-proclaimed "ballot security vigilantes" like the King Street Patriots to cause trouble at the polls.

Mr. Speaker, on this day, the 53rd anniversary of the landmark Voting Rights Act signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on August 6, 1965, I call upon House Speaker RYAN to bring legislation intended to protect the right to vote of all Americans to the floor for debate and vote.

Specifically, I call for the passage of the Voting Rights Advancement Act, (H.R. 2978) of which I am an original co-sponsor, which repairs the damage done to the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court's Shelby decision.

This legislation provides even greater federal oversight of jurisdictions which have a history of voter suppression and protects vulnerable communities from discriminatory voting practices.

Mr. Speaker, before concluding there is one other point I would like to stress.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Johnson said:

Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment.

In other words, political power—and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides—comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right.

And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to both register and vote in every election, state and local as well as federal.

Because if we can register and vote, but fail to do so, we are guilty of voluntary voter suppression, the most effective method of disenfranchisement ever devised.

And in recent years, Americans have not been doing a very good job of exercising our civic responsibility to register, vote, and make their voices heard.

Mr. Speaker, for millions of Americans, the right to vote protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things.

So on this 53rd anniversary of that landmark law, let us rededicate ourselves to honoring those who won for us this precious right by remaining vigilant and fighting against both the efforts of others to abridge or suppress the right to vote and our own apathy in exercising this sacred right.

TRIBUTE TO UNION COUNTY ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Union County ISU Extension and Outreach in Creston, Iowa on their 100-year anniversary. This is an important milestone in their history of service to Southwest Iowa and the Third Congressional District.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach began in 1862 when President Lincoln signed into the Morrill Act, which established land-grant university systems. Extension and Outreach engaged farmers and homemakers to improve seeds, farming, and home practices. ISU Extension and Outreach now focuses on four main topics, ag and natural resources, health and well-being, economic development, and youth and 4-H outreach opportunities.

Throughout its many years of service, ISU Extension and Outreach has successfully met the needs of Southwest Iowa by providing excellent education for youth through 4-H and adults with necessary services to the communities. I congratulate Union County Extension on this historic anniversary and it is an honor to represent its employees in the United States Congress. I wish them nothing but continued success.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. FERNANDO "FRED" C. MACHADO

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise alongside Representative JIM COSTA and Representative DEVIN NUNES to recognize the life and public service of Fernando "Fred" C. Machado, a farmer, military veteran, and long-time advocate of California agriculture.

Mr. Fred Machado was born on March 4, 1932 and emigrated with his family from the Azores Islands of Portugal to the United States at the age of sixteen. Fred's parents, Joe F. and Margaret C. Machado, had seven children of which, Fred was the oldest. Growing up, Fred worked various farm jobs such as milking cows, driving trucks, picking cotton, and harvesting grapes.

At the age of nineteen, Fred joined the United States Navy and served aboard the USS *Montague* AKA 98 during the Korean Conflict. While in the military, he saved enough money to buy a car and a used tractor, and leased twenty-five acres. He realized his life-long ambition, to be a farmer, in 1956 when he bought his first forty acres. In 1957, he married his wife, Maxine Finney, and in 1970 expanded his personal farming operation to include a fifty-head Holstein dairy that grew over the years.

Mr. Machado joined the Fresno County Farm Bureau in 1957. In 1960, he attended an Easton Center meeting and became Vice Chairman. From there, Machado climbed the ranks, eventually serving as Fresno County Farm Bureau President from 1972 to 1974.

Mr. Machado was a major presence on agricultural boards and committees for decades throughout Fresno County and California. He served on the board of directors of the National Milk Producers Federation, Challenge Daily, Danish Creamery, and Ag One Foundation. Mr. Machado served three years on the Big Fresno Fair Board, appointed by President Ronald Reagan. In 1985, Frank Machado received Distinguished Service Awards from both the California Farm Bureau, as well as the Fresno County Farm Bureau.

Although dedicated to Central Valley agriculture, Fred Machado loved spending time with his family, especially his wife. Together, the couple have traveled to twenty-seven countries, and all fifty states. According to Fred, his most memorable trip was to South Korea where he was awarded the South Korea Veterans Peace Medal by the Ambassador of South Korea.

Sadly, on Monday, July 9, 2018, Fred Machado passed away. Although he left us too soon, Fred made a lasting, positive impact on the people he met. Fred is survived by his wife Maxine, their three children, and six grandchildren. Fred Machado left his community of Fresno County a far richer place, and for that we are blessed. He was a loving husband, caring father, agricultural champion, and military veteran. There is no doubt he will be deeply missed.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life of Fernando "Fred" C. Machado. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this difficult time.

SEVEN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL BEST BUDDIES RECEIVES PRES- TIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARDS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Seven Lakes High School Chapter of Best Buddies for receiving numerous awards at the 2018 Best Buddies International Leadership Conference.

Best Buddies, an organization of over 2,500 chapters worldwide, seeks to positively impact the lives of over 1.2 million people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Seven Lakes High School Chapter of Best Buddies received the Overall Outstanding High School Chapter Internationally Award, the Outstanding High School Chapter in Texas Award, the National Pacesetter Award and was honored for being one of the top fundraising chapters in the entire United States. After Hurricane Harvey, members of Best Buddies helped deliver meals to families displaced by flooding. They also participated in Troopons, a program that allows active military families use coupons for up to six months after their expiration date, and were able to donate almost \$35,000 worth of coupons to the program.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the Seven Lakes High School chapter of Best Buddies. I thank them for their commitment to serving our Katy community.