

the process. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that, while passions run high, we never let those passions overtake our purpose, that we remain men and women of high principle and purpose. Though we will have disagreements that may be played out later today, we attempt to restore civility and forsake the vicious and vituperative name calling that taint so many.

BETRAYAL OF DEMOCRACY

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in total outrage over the disenfranchisement of thousands of voters and the real betrayal of our democracy.

I rise today because we will not go gentle into that night. We will not stand silently by to seal the results of an electoral system that is separate and unequal.

We will not stand silently by while African American voters are dismissed from polling places, forced to use antiquated machines, and denied their rightful voice.

I went to Florida to work to get out the vote for the same reason that I have gone overseas as an election observer, because free and fair elections are the very lifeblood of our democracy, because the principle of one person, one vote, must be more than empty rhetoric.

This is not a dispute about chads; this is about fairness.

Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for the right to vote. Medgar Evers died for the right to vote. Today, we stand here in their memory. The right to vote is meaningless if every vote is not counted.

So let the world know that we failed in upholding our democratic principles, and that it was the Reagan-Bush Supreme Court, not the people of the United States, who decided the outcome of this election.

I object to the tallying and to accepting the electoral votes and will formally do so.

CONGRESS READY TO GOVERN AND LEAD IN A BIPARTISAN WAY

(Mr. HUTCHINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, we should rejoice today in the beginning of the 107th Congress. We have an opportunity to lead and to govern; and in that, we should take pride in that responsibility.

I noted that friends from the other side of the aisle indicated they will file an objection today to certain electors. I support the right of them to do that under the Constitution of the United States.

But the fact that no Senator has indicated a willingness to join in that objection indicates that that body, and the vast majority of those in this body, say we are ready to move on and accept the results of the election that has been approved under our rule of law.

So today we are ready to govern, to lead in a bipartisan way; and I think that we should rejoice in that. If there has been problems in the election system, we should review that. If there has been a disenfranchisement of any minority voter or any member of the Armed Forces, that should be reviewed. But we should work together in a positive way in this session of Congress.

GROSS VIOLATIONS OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, we had our problems in Georgia, but the Florida elections were marred by gross violations of the Voting Rights Act.

Voters who had never been to jail were listed as felons and then were not able to vote. Translators were not provided. A second ID was requested of immigrants even though it was not required.

But while Floridians pored over hanging chads and dimpled ballots, one-third of Florida's African American males were unable to vote because of felony convictions.

The Congress today will rubber stamp these gross violations of the Violating Rights Act. For black voters, these egregious insults must be addressed. It is not the act of voting that is democracy, but the counting of those votes; and that is what measures a true democracy.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). The Chair desires to make a statement.

The Chair desires to defer further unanimous consent requests and 1-minute speeches until after the formal ceremony of the day, which is the counting of the electoral votes for President and Vice President.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 12:55 p.m.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 12:55 p.m.

□ 1301

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 1 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.

COUNTING ELECTORAL VOTES—JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE HELD PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1

At 1:02 p.m. the Sergeant at Arms, Wilson Livingood, announced the Vice President and the Senate of the United States.

The Senate entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, headed by the Vice President and the Secretary of the Senate, the Members and officers of the House rising to receive them.

The Vice President took his seat as the Presiding Officer of the joint convention of the two Houses, the Speaker of the House occupying the chair on his left. Senators took seats to the right of the rostrum as prescribed by law.

The joint session was called to order by the Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Mr. Speaker and Members of Congress, the Senate and the House or Representatives, pursuant to the requirements of the Constitution and the laws of the United States, are meeting in joint session for the purpose of opening the certificates and ascertaining and counting the votes of the electors of the several States for President and Vice President.

After ascertainment has been had that the certificates are authentic and correct in form, the tellers will count and make a list of the votes cast by the electors of the several States.

The tellers on the part of the two Houses will take their places at the Clerk's desk.

The tellers, Senator DODD and Senator MCCONNELL on the part of the Senate, and Mr. THOMAS and Mr. FATTAH on the part of the House, took their places at the desk.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair will open the certificates in alphabetical order and pass to the tellers the certificates showing the votes of the electors in each State, and the tellers will then read, count, and announce the result in each State.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Vice President, I make a point of order.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Vice President, we have just completed the closest election in American history.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair is advised by the Parliamentarian that, under section 18 of title 3, United States Code, no debate is allowed in the joint session.