

Mr. Speaker, this bill will forge a strong commitment to Democracy at home and abroad by making substantive changes to how future presidential elections must work in order to avoid the problems of the last presidential election.

It is my opinion that the larger threat to our national identity as a democracy and the sense of well being that Americans once had about the election process is the acceptance of a belief that citizens of this country do not have a voice in its governance. This is the greatest Achilles Heel that this nation has ever faced. Throughout history many nations and governments have ceased to exist because they failed to fulfill the true mission of government, which is to be responsive to the needs of citizens.

For this reason, I am introducing legislation to establish a National Election Day as a legal public holiday to ensure that the fundamental right to vote that is granted to every citizen of the United States is adhered to. I am asking my colleagues in Congress for their support in meeting the voting challenges that have been presented to our growing and diverse nation.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last month we praised our forefathers in observance of Presidents' Day and we also praised the contributions of African Americans in the development and continuation of this country. This month, as women's history gets underway, I rise to recognize some of our foremothers; women who dared to be first, who strove for equality and social justice for all; women who not only broke ceilings but shattered spheres in pursuit of rights that should have been inalienable; women whose contributions continue to pave the way and to inspire others.

Mr. Speaker, I am from Chicago, a city rich in women pioneers and trailblazers, both past and present. One such individual is Ida B. Wells who founded the first black female suffrage club in Illinois, as well as the first kindergarten in a black neighborhood. Wells was born in 1862, was a slave for the first 6 months of her life, and spent the remainder of her life fighting for civil and economic rights for African Americans.

Declaring that one had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or rat in a trap, Wells crusaded against lynching and segregation until her death in 1931.

Labor activist Sylvia Woods was a pioneer in civil rights. During World War II, she led the Union organization at Bendix Aviation. She spent much of the 1940s organizing United Auto Workers Local 330 and formulating the UAW resolution against sex discrimination. Following the war, she assisted women who were laid off in Chicago and co-founded the National Alliance Against Racism.

However, at present there are future history-makers that are making an impact on the lives of the citizens of Chicago and the Nation. Exemplary individuals from today include Addie Wyatt, Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow, Dr. Johnnie Coleman and Mrs. Mamie Bone.

Reverend Addie Wyatt has the distinction of having had active involvement with the three major movements of the 20th Century, labor, civil rights and women's rights. Her leadership roles in labor were international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and she broke ground as the first female local union president of the United Packing House and Allied Workers, and as international vice president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. Her founding roles in Operation Breadbasket and Operation PUSH, as well as her work with Martin Luther King, Jr., illustrate her commitment to civil rights. Her involvement in the women's movement has also generated a number of noteworthy achievements.

Reverend Wyatt is a founding member of the National Organization for Women, was even appointed by Eleanor Roosevelt to serve on the Labor Legislation Committee of the Commission on the Status of Women.

During her distinguished career, she advised Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Carter and other important leaders on causes. She and her husband Claude currently serve as pastors emeritus of the Vernon Park Church of God in Chicago.

Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow is the co-chair of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and is well-known for breaking barriers in a male-dominated profession. She is an ordained minister and on the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women in Illinois.

Another fine citizen is the Reverend Dr. Johnnie Coleman. Sometimes referred to as the first lady of the religious community, she is the founder-minister of Christ Universal Church where 4,000 people go to hear her words of wisdom and healing every Sunday.

To her credit, Reverend Coleman has several organizations in Chicago, the

Universal Foundation for Better Living, Inc.; the Johnnie Coleman Institute; and the Johnnie Coleman Academy and a book of teachings entitled *Open Your Mind and Be Healed*.

Ms. Mamie Bone, as chairperson of the Central Advisory Council for the Chicago Housing Authority, fights regularly for residents. She serves as a member of the CHA Board of Commissioners and continues to champion the employment security and safety of public housing residents.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to just highlight the activities and the involvement of Margaret Blackshere, who currently serves as President of the Illinois Federation of Labor. She is an outstanding labor leader, civic activist, former teacher, political activist and a fighter for the rights of working people all over America.

Margaret Blackshere, is currently the President of the Illinois AFL-CIO. A former classroom teacher, Blackshere has served on all levels of the Labor Movement from president of her local union in Madison to statewide vice president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, to her current position.

Blackshere has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Urban Education—both from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

She has been a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, served as the director of the Illinois Democratic Coordinated Campaign in 1990 and 1992, and is a member of the Democratic National Committee.

Blackshere serves on various boards and councils including the United Way of Illinois, Voices for Illinois Children, White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, and the Illinois Skills Standard & Credentialing Council.

She is a member of American Federation of Teachers Local 763 and is a delegate to the National AFL-CIO Convention.

#### EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, as the Republican co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I am pleased to join the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), the other co-chair of the Women's Caucus, and my other colleagues in celebrating March as women's history month.

Women accomplished so much in the 20th Century and I am fortunate and proud to co-chair the first Women's Caucus of the 21st Century. Let us hope that this century is productive for our daughters and granddaughters as it was for our mothers and us.

The last 100 years have seen women make important advancements in the area of public service. Not only did our predecessors gain the right to vote, but