

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

WHY VOTING MATTERS IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

SPEECH OF

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 14, 2016

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to honor the thousands of brave men and women who, 51 years ago, organized and marched over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama in support of a fundamental truth: that every American has the right to vote.

The Selma march altered the course of history. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Selma produced the voting rights legislation of 1965." The Voting Rights Act of 1965 banned discriminatory voting requirements that disenfranchised African American voters.

For 51 years, the Voting Rights Act has helped ensure that all Americans have an equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

But nearly three years ago, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, saying it was outdated and unjustified. Since this decision, we have seen that the Voting Rights Act is needed now more than ever before.

Today, 30 states require voters to show identification in order to vote. And 15 states already require voters to show a photo ID in order to cast a ballot. At the same time, Republican controlled-legislatures continue their efforts to cut early voting.

All of this limits access to the ballot, making it harder for American citizens to have a say in the direction of our country.

Restrictive voting laws disproportionately impact minorities and low-income communities.

Upwards of 25 percent of African Americans lack a photo ID, compared to 8 percent of white Americans. Moreover, 12 percent of those earning less than \$25,000 annually lack a photo ID.

States with strict voter ID laws require voters to have certain government-issued photo IDs, like driver's licenses. However, African Americans and low-income individuals are less likely to have driver's licenses because they are more likely to live in cities and rely on public transportation.

These groups also have a harder time obtaining other valid forms of photo ID because they often lack the time and money to track down necessary documents, like Social Security cards, and because ID offices are not easily accessible to them.

America is a nation built on the democratic process, and when that process is broken for any of us, it impacts all of us.

People want to vote because they care deeply about where our country is headed. They want to create a better life for themselves and their families, and they know that their ability to do so is in many ways tied to the outcomes of elections.

As a country, we should make it as easy as possible for people to exercise this right. Elec-

tion officials should not erode the democratic principles that they have sworn to uphold. They should make sure every American citizen has an equal voice in the democratic process.

Protecting every person's right to vote is essential to a fully functioning democracy. The countless men and women who risked their lives to defend that right knew our system of government only works when it's inclusive and fair—when it enables all voices to have a say in the future of our country.

So it's our responsibility to make it easier for people to cast a ballot. Just as it's the responsibility of those people to vote. When people don't vote, not only do they dishonor those who risked everything for voting rights; they risk perpetuating policies that hurt hard-working Americans. I can tell you with certainty—had we not elected President Obama, we wouldn't have the Affordable Care Act, and 20 million fewer people would have health insurance.

So it's important for every eligible American to vote. Failure to do so can have grave consequences for American families, who deserve public policies that work for them, not special interests.

Voting rights has been historically important to the African American community, which was denied its constitutional right to vote for far too long. That is why this caucus—the Congressional Black Caucus—is doing everything possible to expand voting rights protections and increase citizen participation in elections.

We are calling for an immediate restoration of the Voting Rights Act. Democracy cannot flourish until voting rights are reinstated in this country. We have broken down many barriers to justice and equality since the Selma march and the signing of the Voting Rights Act, but we dishonor those accomplishments and the people who fought for them if we accept the continued weakening of voting rights.

Fifty-one years ago, thousands of Americans marched in Selma against racial discrimination in voting. That march is ours to continue.

HONORING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT LOUIS CRISIS NURSERY

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Saint Louis Crisis Nursery, which will celebrate its 30th Anniversary on April 2, 2016. In 1986, Saint Louis Crisis Nursery opened its doors to provide twenty-four-hour shelter and special care for children whose families have faced an emergency or crisis. Numerous areas are served by Saint Louis Crisis Nursery including St. Louis City, St. Charles, and Wentzville. For over 30 years, Saint Louis Crisis Nursery has provided

protection for more than 98,000 children who were at risk of abuse and neglect. With the month of April being National Child Abuse Prevention Month, this recognition is well deserved for an organization that is working to prevent child abuse.

The mission of Saint Louis Crisis Nursery is to keep Missouri's most vulnerable citizens safe from harm. Supporting and strengthening the fragile and the under-resourced is key to overcoming the cycle of neglect and abuse.

In addition to providing shelter during emergencies, Saint Louis Crisis Nursery offers a variety of programs: parent education groups, home visits, teen parenting groups, art and play therapy, holiday hearts campaign, training institute, school supply drive, community outreach, and family emergency fund. These programs enrich the families in the community, which in turn encourages children to be raised in a healthy environment.

Saint Louis Crisis Nursery started out with one crisis nursery location and has grown to five crisis nursery locations during the past 30 years. They have also established seven community outreach centers and a regional administrative office. The staff has grown from 12 to more than 100, and counseling/support services that started with assisting 435 families now touches over 6,000 lives.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Saint Louis Crisis Nursery on their 30th Anniversary of serving the citizens of their community.

CONGRATULATING MR. JIM BROWN ON BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Jim Brown of Hollidaysburg, PA, on being elected 2016 President of the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA).

Chartered in 1952, PBA is a statewide non-profit affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders. The guiding voice for the state's home building industry and housing consumers, PBA provides an admirable service to countless people, especially as in one way or another, we all have a fundamental need for shelter. At the core of this herculean task, PBA works to enhance and improve the ability of our state's building professionals to provide the best quality homes at the most affordable prices for all Pennsylvanians. Given these significant responsibilities, it's easy to see why the organization needs strong and experienced leadership. That's why I am proud to highlight Jim's election.

As president of J.R. Brown Construction, Inc., a member of the board of the National Association of Home Builders, and a member of the Blair-Bedford Builders Association, where he has served as president, vice president, builder director, chairman of the Scholarship and Social Committees, and co-chair of

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

the Home and Garden Show Committee, Jim undoubtedly has the experience and service-minded approach necessary to lead PBA in its noble mission. I am also pleased to highlight that Jim is the first Blair County builder to be elected to this office since 1972, a fact that our communities can take pride in. I have complete faith that Jim will put his 26 years of building experience to work in representing this critical industry and all those who rely on affordable housing to pursue their version of the American Dream.

On behalf of the citizens of the Ninth District of Pennsylvania, I want to thank Mr. Jim Brown for continuing his service to our community and congratulate him for being elected President of the PBA.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN BARNETT—
28TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation's women. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Karen Barnett, of Atwater Village, a unique neighborhood in Los Angeles, California.

A Los Angeles native, Karen has lived in Atwater Village for the past 14 years. In pursuing her education, Karen chose to stay local and attended Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Today, her experience as a designer provides a unique perspective on improving her community and neighborhood.

Currently, Karen Barnett is a member of the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council. She serves as Chair of the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council River Committee, which she initiated because of her concerns regarding the present and possible future uses of the Los Angeles River. In this capacity, Karen has dedicated many hours finding ways to get the community involved in possible projects along Atwater Village's four mile section of the Los Angeles River.

Ms. Barnett has been a steadfast advocate for the environment and for the Los Angeles River. Under Karen's direction and with the approval of the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council Board, the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council River Committee applied for a National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program technical service grant. As a result of the Committee's hard work and dedication, Atwater Village was awarded the Atwater Village East Bank River Way grant, which will help map the area and identify locations for possible projects.

I ask all Members to join me today in honoring an exceptional woman of California's 28th Congressional District, Karen Barnett, for her extraordinary service to the community.

THE CONTINUING ROLE OF WOMEN
IN THE VOTING RIGHTS MOVE-
MENT

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, in honor of Restoration Tuesday and March being Women's History month; I rise to acknowledge the role of women in the continuing battle for protecting our constitutional right to vote.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was only made possible because of the brave men and women who marched,—and were willing to die for voting equality as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday. Moreover, the narrative of the battle for voting rights in America is incomplete without the story of the strong contributions of the women who helped to advance these efforts. Nearly a decade has passed since Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in July 2006. This reauthorization not only continued to guarantee protections against modern day voting barriers, it elevated three mothers of the civil rights movement in its title: Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King. Honoring these great women who fought for equality and justice, this reauthorization stamped a day in time where both parties were able to come together and show overwhelming support for the most essential right on which this great democracy was founded, the right to vote.

However, when the Supreme Court struck down Section 4 pre-clearance and federal protection for vulnerable communities in 2013, a number of states, including Alabama, passed restrictive laws designed to suppress the vote. It is imperative that we remain ever vigilant in upholding the legacy, not only of the historic women for which the reauthorization of the Act was named, but of the three women who sat on the Supreme Court bench and gave dissenting opinions following the tragic Section 4 strike down.

Whether protesting from the streets or the Supreme Court bench, women have long played a vital role in the movement for voting rights in America's history. As we celebrate the rich history of women in politics during Women's History Month, we honor the conviction and determination of women like Susan B. Anthony and Amelia Boynton Robinson who fought relentlessly for equality for the ultimate benefit of our country as a whole. When women succeed, America succeeds and Congress should honor the fight and sacrifice by passing the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2016.

Fannie Lou Hamer is famous for stating what so many were feeling then and still feel now when she said—"I am sick and tired of being sick and tired." Like the brave women of our past, we all need to be sick and tired of injustice and inequality. On this Restoration Tuesday, we honor the women who championed the cause of protection of our sacred and fundamental right to the polls.

WELCOME HOME VIETNAM
VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATION

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's Vietnam War Commemoration gives us the opportunity for all Americans to recognize, honor, and thank our Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices during the Vietnam War from November 1, 1955 through May 15, 1975.

Over 9,000 organizations across America have joined with the Department of Defense as a Commemorative Partner to honor our Nation's Vietnam Veterans, including Benjamin Mills Chapter, NSDAR; the Illinois State Organization, NSDAR; and the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This year's commemoration includes nine million Americans, approximately 7.2 million of them living today, and makes no distinction as to who served in-country, in-theater, or was stationed elsewhere during those 20 years—all answered the call of duty.

Veterans' Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald has designated March 29, 2016, the last day that U.S. troops were on the ground in Vietnam, as a day to honor those who have "borne the battle", and to extend gratitude and appreciation to them and their families.

Alan Gaffner, the Mayor of the City of Greenville, has also proclaimed March 29, 2016 as: WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY in Greenville, Illinois. I stand with Major Gaffner and my constituents in Greenville as we humbly thank our Vietnam Veterans for their service and sacrifice.

CONGRATULATING LOGAN
MORIARITY FOR HIS FIRST
PLACE WIN IN THE 2016 MIS-
SOURI STATE WRESTLING CHAM-
PIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Logan Moriarity for his first place win in the 2016 Class 4, 170 pound weight class, Missouri State Wrestling Championship.

Logan and his coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to Jefferson City High School and their local community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Logan for a job well done.