

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, on July 28, 2005, I was present and did vote "aye" on rollcall vote No. 448, but was recorded as "not voting". I respectfully ask that the record show I did vote "aye" on final passage of H.R. 5, the HEALTH Act of 2005, but was not recorded.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965**HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago, on August 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed a landmark piece of legislation, a turning point in our Nation's continuing struggle for equality, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I rise today in honor of that momentous occasion.

Aristotle once wrote that "if liberty and equality . . . are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." More than 2,000 years after Aristotle's death, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said that "all men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality." In 1965, this Congress passed the Voting Rights Act to ensure that all Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, would be able to share in our government, to mutually enjoy the blessings of liberty and democracy.

Nevertheless, despite a constitutional guarantee of the right to vote, before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became the law of the land, African Americans and other minority citizens were often forced to take a literacy test, pay a poll tax or overcome other often insurmountable barriers before they could vote. Those who could not pass the tests—which were, for the most part, absurdly unfair—or were too poor to pay the poll tax were denied the most basic right of all Americans: the right to take part in the selection of their Nation's leaders. President John F. Kennedy once said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

It was the hope of the Johnson administration and this body that the Voting Rights Act would be a solution and bring to an end these and other measures that compromised the legitimacy of our democracy. President Johnson told his Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, that he wanted for all citizens "the right to vote with no ifs, ands, or buts—that's the key." It was his dream—and that of American men and women from every walk of life—to unquestionably ensure the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship to all Americans.

For the most part, the bill has been successful. Under Section 2 of the Act, for example, Congress prohibited the use of literacy tests throughout the country. They also identified those parts of the Nation with the greatest

potential for discriminatory activity and mandated Federal oversight of these locations. With these measures and others, the Voting Rights Act became perhaps the most effective piece of civil rights legislation in history.

In my home state of Louisiana, 31.6 percent of African Americans were registered to vote in 1965, compared to 80.5 percent of whites. A little more than 30 years later, registration rates among African Americans climbed to 77.1 percent in the State, a jump of almost 50 percent and fully 2 percent higher than the rate of registration for whites. Such change in a comparatively short period is remarkable by a number of measures, not only making our democracy more inclusive, but also changing the face of our government.

The legislation also brought to fruition a government that more closely resembles the makeup of our population. The Civil Rights Coalition reports that "in 1964, there were only approximately 300 African Americans in public office nationwide, including just three in Congress. There are now more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 43 members of Congress, the largest number ever."

Despite these encouraging numbers, the VRA remains necessary to the continuing struggle to truly open our great experiment in Democracy to all. The results of the 2000 election proved to our country that we have yet to achieve the equality and democracy necessary, as Dr. King put it, to "live out the true meaning of our creed." Every American citizen who wishes to do so is entitled to have their voice heard and their vote counted—when that right is so blatantly ignored, we appear to regress to a time when the decision making process was reserved for the few and the powerful.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act 40 years ago today was a milestone in legislative history. This Congress defended the civil liberties of every American citizen, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, we cannot let our progress overshadow the very hard work that remains. Forty years on, every election still brings stories of voter intimidation, suppression and discrimination. It is incumbent upon us to secure the franchise, the most fundamental right of every American, and its exercise. Accordingly, we must continue to build on the sacrifices of ordinary men and women who became the heroes of equality and to uphold our promise to guarantee voting rights to every American citizen and ensure that it is carried out to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, on this anniversary, I urge my colleagues to renew our collective commitment to the fundamental American principles that underlie the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

WISHING A HAPPY 50TH WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY TO BENJAMIN
AND MARSHA EMANUEL**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a milestone in the lives of my parents, Benjamin and Marsha Emanuel. On August 21, 2005, they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. On behalf of their four children and eleven grandchildren, I'd like to

take this opportunity to wish them a very happy golden anniversary.

My father, Dr. Benjamin Emanuel, was born in Israel and moved to Chicago. While he was completing his medical residency he met my mother Marsha Smulevitz, a nurse in the same hospital. They were married on August 21, 1955, and settled in Chicago's North Andersonville neighborhood where they went on to raise four children in a loving home where we learned the values of public service and compassion which continue to guide me to this day.

My mother is a loving and caring person with a remarkable history of serving the greater good. In the early 1960's, she served 4 years on the Congress of Racial Equality, founded by students at the University of Chicago, and participated in Freedom Marches in the South. She went on to earn an advanced degree in social work from Northeastern Illinois University. For over 20 years, my mother has maintained her commitment to public service by working as a social worker and counselor to local children and adults.

My father was a practicing pediatrician on Chicago's North Side for over 40 years and continues to volunteer at Children's Memorial Hospital. My constituents in the Illinois Fifth District include many former patients of my father, and people often tell me of how much his life's work has meant to them.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be the son of Benjamin and Marsha Emanuel, and I want to thank them for all of their love and support through the years. I ask that my colleagues please join me in wishing these two extraordinary people a very happy 50th wedding anniversary.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-CENTRAL
AMERICA-UNITED STATES FREE
TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMEN-
TATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement, DR-CAFTA, as it will level the playing field for American manufacturers and farmers. The six DR-CAFTA countries, which include the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, have had preferential access to U.S. markets for approximately 20 years as a result of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, CBI, and the Generalized System of Preferences, GSP, program. Consequently, DR-CAFTA countries have enjoyed a "one-way street" of market access where by 80 percent of goods and almost 99 percent of agricultural products enter duty free. Conversely, American exporters have faced tariffs on almost all of the goods exported to the region.

It is vital to my home State of Missouri that we continue to expand and open new markets for American farm products. In 2003, 25 percent of Missouri's \$5 billion farm cash receipts were attributable to foreign trade. Half of all soybeans and 1 in 5 rows of corn grown in Missouri are destined for foreign markets. Absent DR-CAFTA, American farm exports will