

and heroism, and his dedication to his community and country.

RECOGNIZING 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF STUDENT NONVIOLENT CO-
ORDINATING COMMITTEE AND
THE NATIONAL SIT-IN MOVE-
MENT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1566, which commemorates the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Sit-In Movement. I want to give a special thank you to my fellow Georgian and the Dean of the Georgia delegation, Representative JOHN LEWIS for introducing this bill and for his own personal courage in participating in the Civil Rights Movement. Congressman LEWIS is an American hero whose bravery has improved the quality of life for millions now and in the future.

The sit-in movement was started by the extraordinary bravery of four young men in Greensboro, North Carolina. In February of 1960, these brave men started a movement that grew to more than 30 communities in seven different states in only one month's time. Even more impressive is how one and a half years after the inception of the sit-ins, the movement had attracted over 70,000 participants and a sit-in had occurred in every Southern state. The sit-in movement was truly

a grassroots movement that showed the power of the cause and of the method. By choosing non-violent action, the sit-in movement was able to win hearts and minds across the country and led to the integration of restaurants, bus lines and public facilities all over the nation.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is another extraordinary and influential group that played a major role in the civil rights movement. Founded in April, 1960, in Raleigh, North Carolina, the SNUG grew into a large organization that operated across the south. The group was inspired by the Greensboro sit-ins and began with an \$800 grant from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), founded in my home State of Georgia, for a conference where student activists could share experiences and coordinate activities. The conference was a success and was attended by 126 students in 12 states. Julian Bond and Representative JOHN LEWIS, both from my home State of Georgia, were among the attendees at the April 1960 conference. Congressman JOHN LEWIS went on to be the 3rd Chairman of the SNCC.

The SNCC grew to prominence, and put themselves at great personal risk, by organizing "freedom rides" across the deep south. At least 436 people took part in these Freedom Rides during the spring and summer of 1961. The SNCC grew into an organization of organizers dedicated to building community-based political organizations of the rural poor. After the Freedom Rides, the SNCC worked primarily on voter registration, along with local protests about segregated public facilities. As a final, monumental step, the group took the leading role in the 1963 March on Washington where more than 200,000 people marched

peacefully to the Lincoln Memorial to demand equal justice for all citizens under the law. The next year, this group merged with Congress on Racial Equality and the National Advancement of Colored People with the primary goal of creating a desegregated political climate necessary to pass legislation to expand civil rights and voting rights for all citizens. I agree with Julian Bond when he said that "a final SNCC legacy is the destruction of the psychological shackles which had kept black southerners in physical and mental peonage; SNCC helped break those chains forever. It demonstrated that ordinary women and men, young and old, could perform extraordinary tasks."

The civil rights movement changed the fabric of America. The movement led to the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which put an end to legal discrimination and segregation in this country. That battle for full equality is not yet over, however. As we move forward, we must remember the past and the resounding success of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the National Sit-In Movement.

As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am honored to address the House of Representatives on the fiftieth anniversary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the National Sit-In Movement. I walk in the footsteps of JOHN LEWIS and Julian Bond, great civil rights leaders from Georgia, whose heroism and bravery improved the lives of all Americans. Fifty years later, we all owe a debt of gratitude to the civil rights movement and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.