

Andrew W. Cooper, a community activist, was the impetus for this historic change. A year after the Voting Rights Act became law he sued New York State officials in a case called *Cooper v. Power*. The ensuing legal battle led to the redrawing of the now historically famous 12th Congressional District of New York (the district was later reapportioned to parts of the 11th District and now 9th Congressional District).

The ruling set in motion a monumental shift in voting rights in New York and beyond, redefining political representation for people of color. It was built on the foundation of civil rights gains made in the south and helped push the agenda for Voting Rights nationwide.

As a woman of color, a witness to the reelection of our nation's first Black President, and the U.S. Representative for the Ninth Congressional District, which is a majority-minority district covered under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, I am deeply concerned by the potential ramifications of this case and the impact of its ruling on people of color and their right to vote.

Most recently a Brooklyn elected official wrote an editorial questioning the validity and significance of Brooklyn's classification as a Section 5 covered jurisdiction. Brooklyn NY has one of the largest concentrations of people of color in the nation. It is also worth noting that another elected official from Brooklyn appeared in "Black face", just this Sunday. These types of hostile inquiries and acts erode the fabric of American democracy and speak to the heart of why Section 5 preclearance is vital to the realization of justice and equality.

In many areas, racially polarized voting and the intent to disenfranchise Black voters demonstrate that the requirements of Section Five remain crucial to the basic function of our democracy.

The 9th Congressional district of New York, which I presently represent, was birthed in 1965 when Andrew Cooper brought suit under the Voting Rights Act against racial gerrymandering and in response to widespread and prolific discriminatory voting practices in Brooklyn. This suit gave birth to New York's 12th Congressional district and the election in 1968 of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman ever elected to the U.S. Congress to whom I have the distinct honor and privilege of succeeding almost 40 years later.

Even in the years after the formation of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971, people of color remain underrepresented at every level of elected offices.

These are just a few examples of why Section 5, and in particular its preclearance clauses, are essential to ensure that changes to voting rules and practices do not result in voter suppression, retrogression, and discrimination.

Without the existence of majority-minority districts, the voices of millions of Americans will be excluded from Capitol Hill; and their perspectives would not inform public debate. Without Section 5 covered districts, our democracy would exist in form, but not in fact.

When I was elected to Congress in 2006, and after Congress had just reauthorized the Voting Rights Act, I would never have thought that today we would be re-litigating issues that I believed were long since settled and resolved.

It took our nation over 200 years to obtain the victories of the Civil Rights Movement,

now less than 50 years after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law are we truly to believe that systemic racial discrimination and voter suppression has ended?, I think not!

These advancements in the struggle for equality, permitting All Americans to freely exercise their right to vote will take more than a lifetime to protect and preserve. Jurists of the Supreme Court, a word of advice- If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

ST. MARKS PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of St. Mark's Parochial School in Bristol Borough, PA. On December 27, 1887, St. Mark's Parochial School was opened and officially blessed, becoming the first parochial school in Bucks County. St. Mark's School was initially staffed by The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Father Ward, who was Pastor of St. Mark Parish from 1879 to 1887, is considered the founder of Catholic education in Bristol. For the next 125 years, the school would become an integral part of the Bristol Borough community.

Thanks to its dedicated teachers and staff, St. Mark's Parochial School provides students with a high quality and well-rounded education in a Christian environment. It helps children develop a strong sense of morality and concern for their fellow neighbor. Further, members of St. Mark's routinely demonstrate an active presence in fostering their community. The school has become a great source of pride for the Borough of Bristol.

St. Mark's shows promise and growth as an institution and will continue to cultivate young minds. Because the school serves as a model of excellence in education and an active participant in community development, it is my pleasure to honor St. Mark's Parochial School of Bristol Borough on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

SEQUESTER HARM IS "ABSOLUTELY OVER-HYPED"

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, Mayor Bloomberg says, "Spare me!"

He said yesterday that the Administration's efforts to scare people about the sequester have gone too far.

He said, "In all fairness, on Monday, we'll be able to police the streets."

He said "there's a lot of posturing" and that statements about laying off employees, closing down hospitals, and letting prisoners go "are not good for the country."

The Mayor said, "Spare me, I live in that world. I mean come on, let's get serious here."

In today's National Journal Daily, Steve Bell, senior director of the Bipartisan Policy Center, says the sequester is "absolutely over-hyped."

He says, "A sequester will occur and the next day the likelihood is that almost no one will know that it started."

The choice is simple. We can cut now or crash in the very near future.

The press says the sequester will hurt the economy. Actually, the sequester is miniscule in comparison to the harm to our economy from the President's tax hikes, Obamacare, and environmental overkill.

HONORING MINNIE DODGE

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Ms. Minnie Dodge, Administrative Manager for the Modesto Chamber of Commerce, who is retiring after 14 years of outstanding service to our community.

Ms. Dodge attended Boise State University. During her time in the state of Idaho, she worked for L.B. Industries, Inc., the Larry Barnes Foundation, and was the co-owner of Omega Construction.

Minnie then relocated to California, where she was hired at the Modesto Chamber of Commerce as the Customer Service Manager in February of 1999. During her years at the Chamber, she was on several committees, including the Ag Aware Luncheon, the Harvest Luncheon, the Good Egg Breakfast, and the Modesto Chamber of Commerce Leadership Steering Committee. In July 2002, Minnie was promoted to Administrative Manager.

Minnie and her husband, Tony Meli, will soon be moving back to Boise, Idaho. Her family includes children Nicole, Cherene and her husband Steve, and Shane and his wife Tracy; along with their grandchildren Emily, Ashley, Conner, and Jack.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending Minnie Dodge for her numerous years of selfless service to the betterment of our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district and missed the vote on Monday, February 25, 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 47, H.R. 667—To redesignate the Dryden Flight Research Center as the Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center and the Western Aeronautical Test Range as the Hugh L. Dryden Aeronautical Test Range.

HONORING JESSE J. JOSSELL, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a remarkable veteran of the Korean Conflict from 1954–1957, Pastor Jesse J. Jossell, Jr., of Marks, Mississippi.