ISIS told the mother of the home: You have two choices. You are to leave now or you are to pay the tax.

The mother pled: I will pay, but give me a few seconds because my daughter is in the shower.

But the ISIS terrorists did not wait. Instead, they set fire to the house. The mother, clutching a small child, escaped. But the girl was trapped in the burning home. Later, she was found. She had such severe burns, she died in her mother's arms. The last thing she said to her mother was: Forgive them.

The girl is a better person than most of us.

From beheading to burning little Christian girls alive, ISIS' evil genocide knows no bounds. ISIS murders in the name of religious jihad.

Will we allow this evil to continue? Or shall all religions unite and hold ISIS accountable?

We must stop ISIS' malicious murder of the innocent. Justice demands it. And, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we are supposed to do.

And that is just the way it is.

□ 2015

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for half of the remaining time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is once again an honor and a privilege to stand on the floor of the House of Representatives to help anchor the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour, this hour of power, where, for the next 60 minutes, members of the Congressional Black Caucus have the opportunity to speak directly to the American people on an issue of great significance.

Today's Special Order hour topic is Democracy in Crisis: The Reckless, Republican Assault on the Right to Vote in America.

It is with great dismay that many of us come to the House floor today to speak to an issue of significance to the American people and our democracy.

There is nothing more sacred to the integrity of the democratic process than the right to vote. There are people throughout the years who died trying to secure the ability to participate in the franchise to help execute upon that great American promise of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, to vote for those individuals who would represent them at the city, State or Federal level, regardless of race or religion, ethnicity, immigration status.

While we undeniably have made tremendous progress in America, clearly there has been an effort by some, unfortunately, led, in part, by people on the other side of the aisle, to stop something so fundamentally American as the unfettered right to participate in our democracy by voting.

Today we are going to explore some of the history connected to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, widely regarded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever enacted by this august body.

Of course, we know that, in 2013, in the Shelby County v. Holder decision, the Supreme Court effectively gutted section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, widely known as the preclearance provision, in a manner that has adversely impacted the ability of voting rights advocates and others to protect the ability of people to participate without obstacle or obstruction.

It is my honor, as one of the anchors of the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order, to join in that responsibility with my coanchor, who, from the moment which she arrived in the Congress, has been a tremendous force for the district that she represents, a voice for the voiceless, someone who is both fierce in her beliefs, but willing to reach out to others across the aisle in order to get things done on behalf of the American people.

It is now my honor and my privilege to yield to my distinguished colleague from Ohio, Representative JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise this evening proud to stand with my coanchor, my classmate, the gentleman from the Eighth Congressional District of New York (Mr. JEFFRIES). I say to the gentleman that I look forward to tonight's Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, Congressman JEFFRIES and I, along with our colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus, will have scholarly debate on how our democracy is in crises because of the assault on the right to vote in America.

As we just heard from Mr. JEFFRIES and we will hear from others, voting is the voice of the people. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed with bipartisan support, established strong Federal protections for the freedom to vote, banning or limiting many of the discriminatory election policies and practices of the Jim Crow South.

Combined with subsequent legislation such as the National Voter Registration Act, which requires State agencies to provide opportunities for voter registration, the Voting Rights Act has helped our Nation make significant progress in boosting voting for African Americans and other historically marginalized groups.

But we find ourselves, Mr. Speaker, today facing our first Presidential election in 50 years without the full protection of the Voting Rights Act.

As Mr. JEFFRIES referenced in Shelby, the Supreme Court decision reversed over 50 years of progress made to expand access to the voting booth and opened a pathway to new voting laws that discriminate against African American voters.

As a result of Shelby, new voting restrictions have been put in place in 22 States, 18 of them, Mr. Speaker, Republican-led since 2010, making it harder for millions of Americans to exercise their right to vote.

The way States have been able to reduce the voting power of minority communities and put in place new voting restrictions in an effort to make it harder for millions of Americans to vote is appalling.

Mr. Speaker, our democracy is in crisis. Our right to vote is under assault.

Mr. Speaker, why would we want to make it harder for Americans to vote?

I believe we should be making it easier for Americans to have access to the ballot box. But, apparently, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not agree.

We need to put forth a vote on the Voting Rights Act now. New laws range from strict photo ID requirements to early voting cutbacks, to registration restriction.

Among these 16 States with new voting restrictions is my home State of Ohio. In Ohio, in 2014, lawmakers cut 6 days of early voting and eliminated the golden week, during which voters could register and cast a ballot all in one trip, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, Ohio is not alone in its efforts to make it harder for Americans to vote. Mr. Speaker, the freedom to vote is one of America's most constitutionally guaranteed rights, and it should be easily accessible to those who want to exercise it.

That is why I am honored this Congress to serve as the deputy vice chair of the newly created Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, a caucus dedicated to protecting our democracy by ensuring the fundamental right to vote is safeguarded for all Americans.

However, after a longstanding tradition of bipartisanship on voting protections, House Republicans now refuse to bring either bill to the floor for a vote.

This is unthinkable, Mr. Speaker. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been reauthorized with bipartisan support five times. Congress has a duty to ensure elections are free and transparent so that all eligible voters feel comfortable and welcome.

I would echo President Obama's February 13, 2013, statement on the Voting Rights Act, and let me quote:

''We must all do our part to make sure our God-given rights are protected . . . That includes one of the most fundamental right of a democracy: the right to vote. When any American, no matter where they live or what their party, are denied that right . . . we are betraying our ideals.''

There are 168 days until the Presidential election, and our democracy

still has far too many missing voices, particularly among those who are already at a disadvantage due to deeply rooted racial and class barriers in our society.

We must ensure that voter suppression is not the new normal. In order to have a truly vibrant democracy, the United States must take steps to ensure inclusive voting by reducing barriers to voting.

Efforts to suppress voting turnout undermine democracy, and those efforts, Mr. Speaker, are on the wrong side of history.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, the time is now. I am calling on all people, including our community and national leaders, to join me in working to eliminate voter suppression and to restore what so many people fought for, marched for, died for. Mr. Speaker, that is the Voting Rights Act.

Human rights organizations like the NAACP and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights have been at the forefront of these issues along with my colleagues, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, encouraging and training poll workers and poll protectors.

It is up to all of us, Mr. Speaker, to protect the most at risk among us and to expand opportunity for all.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman for making several extremely important observations about the urgency of restoring the Voting Rights Act, of Congress voting up or down.

All we are asking for is for Members of this House to act on bipartisan legislation that has been introduced in this Congress that would respond to the Supreme Court's decision, adopt a new coverage formula, and allow us to move forward in advance of this consequential Presidential election with a system that we can all be confident in will fairly allow everyone who wants to vote the opportunity to vote.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor and my privilege to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, someone who had a distinguished record prior to his service in the House as a jurist on the bench as a civil rights lawyer in North Carolina and has continued his fight here on the floor of the House of Representatives for the last 10 years on behalf of fairness, justice, and equality, particularly in his capacity as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I thank the gentleman for yielding time this evening, and I thank him for his incredible work not just in the Congressional Black Caucus, but on behalf of the people that he represents in that great borough of Brooklyn, New York.

And I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) for all the work that she does. She is an incredible leader in this Congress, and we appreciate her so very much.

I want to thank my colleagues for selecting the topic for discussion tonight. It is certainly an appropriate topic.

There are so many of us who have been working on enforcement and extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. They are too numerous to mention, but I will certainly single out Congressman JOHN LEWIS, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL, Congressman Mark Veasey, Congressman JOHN CONYERS, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, and so many others, who have just worked tirelessly to enforce the right to vote not just for African Americans, but for all Americans.

□ 2030

Mr. Speaker, on August 6, 1965—and I remember it so very well; it was a few days after I had graduated from high school—this Congress, this House of Representatives where we are seated tonight, and the Senate, which is just a few steps down the hall, together passed the Voting Rights Act. This act was signed by the President of the United States immediately, and it has had a profound impact on empowering African American communities all across the country to participate in the electoral process.

Prior to the Voting Rights Act, it was a sad state of affairs, Mr. JEFFRIES, in North Carolina, in South Carolina, and in Alabama. It was a very sad state of affairs. In order to register to vote, one had to be able to read and to write. But not just that. They had to be able to satisfy a registrar. In all cases, it was a White registrar. African American citizens had to satisfy a registrar who, in many cases, discriminated that he or she was competent and able to be able to read and to write; and, in most instances, those would-be voters were denied the right to vote.

In addition to that, laws were passed all across the South that disenfranchised minority groups. Redistricting schemes were drawn to disenfranchise, at-large elections and staggered terms and all of the rest. So there was a necessity—a necessity—Congressman, for the Voting Rights Act. It was just not a good idea; it was actually a necessity in order to enforce the right to vote. Congress enacted this tool, and it has been very effective.

One of the most effective parts of the Voting Rights Act—there are many parts of the Voting Rights Act. Section 2 is that part that gives minority communities the right to bring lawsuits, and that applies to every county in the United States. It is a permanent law. It is on the books permanently. It also eliminated the literacy tests.

But there is another provision that kind of goes unnoticed from time to time, and it is called section 5. Section 5 is an oversight provision. It gives the Federal Government the right to preclear election changes before they go into effect to determine whether or not these changes would have a discriminatory result in their community.

Section 5, Mr. Speaker, does not apply to every county in America. Section 5 only applies to certain States that had a long history of voter discrimination. In my State, for example, North Carolina, the whole State was not included under section 5. Only 40 counties were included for preclearance. So it has been a good law, and it has worked quite well. As the previous speaker said, it has been extended from time to time.

But, Mr. Speaker, on June 25, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that section 5—first of all, the Supreme Court ruled that section 5 is a proper exercise of legislative authority. But the Supreme Court surprised us. It determined that the formula used to determine which counties or which States should be subject to section 5 is outdated. The Court suggested that it needed fixing.

So the Court called on us here in this Congress to fix it, and the Congressional Black Caucus has been fighting every day since that Court decision to try to put together a bipartisan agreement to fix the formula.

No one in this Congress has worked harder than Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL of Alabama. Her bill is now pending before this House, and we need to fix the formula, and we need to do it now.

When you look at the 2013 discriminatory election law changes and the 2011 legislative and congressional redistricting, you must conclude—anyone must conclude—that there is a concerted effort in many parts of the country to disenfranchise particular groups of voters from participating in the process.

The absence of section 5 protection allows States—allows States, my State included—to pass discriminatory laws that disenfranchise African American voters and other groups. We have seen these laws enacted in State after State all across the country.

On July 25, 2013, Mr. JEFFRIES, the North Carolina General Assembly passed—now, remember, the Supreme Court decision was June 25, 2013—30 days later. I don't know why they didn't do it 30 days earlier. Well, I do know why, and that is because there was a section 5. But after section 5 was suspended by the Supreme Court, 30 days later, the general assembly passed a sweeping voting law that discriminates not only against African Americans, but other minority groups. It discriminates against students and seniors.

This law has also cut back on early voting. That is a big deal in our communities. It cut back on early voting by a week and barred same-day voter registration. The law went into effect upon passage, and there is no oversight in section 5 to protect us.

This is disappointing. This law is regressive and absolutely disgusting. We have to let our State lawmakers know that our voices matter and that all citizens—all citizens—in this country should be able to participate in democracy through unfettered access to the ballot box.

So, in closing, the Congressional Black Caucus, of which I am honored to chair, vows to continue our fight to restore section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to stop the assault on access to the ballot box because every citizen deserves the right to vote.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for his eloquent words and for explaining the practical realities of the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the coverage formula and effectively invalidate section 5 and the implications that that has had on people all across the country, in North Carolina and beyond.

I also note that the Voting Rights Act in section 5 and the coverage formula in section 4, upon passage in 1965, didn't just impact States in the South. There are five counties in New York City that constitute the Big Apple, and three of those counties in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn, were covered by section 5.

We recognize that there had been challenges all across the country with respect to the right to vote, and many of us, even beyond the South, have now lost that critical protection. That is why it is time for Congress to act.

I thank the chairman for his continued leadership.

It is now my honor to yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from the great State of Alabama (Ms. SEWELL). She has been a tremendous proponent of the right to vote. We were all in awe of her leadership last year when we were down in Selma, Alabama, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and are thankful for all that she continues to do to uphold that great American tradition that sprang forth from that small city down in Alabama where the distinguished gentlewoman hails from. She currently is a sponsor—the lead sponsor—of the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would fix the problem that the Supreme Court created.

It is now my honor to yield to Representative TERRI SEWELL.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my distinguished colleague from New York and my distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio, for this wonderful hour of power on voting. It is my great honor to stand with them, to rise today and to join with my CBC colleagues to discuss the reckless Republican assault on the right to vote in America.

We began tonight by bringing attention to the ever-evolving crisis brewing in our democracy. Since the Supreme Court in the Shelby decision gutted the preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, there has been nothing short of an assault on the right to vote—the most sacred right to vote. This 2016 election will be the first time in my lifetime and, I daresay, in the lifetime of the gentleman from New York, that we will have a Presidential election in which there will not be the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As the gentleman so rightly acknowledged, I welcomed, in 2015, 100 Members of Congress, both Republican and Democratic, to my hometown of Selma, Alabama, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the historic Bloody Sunday march from Selma to Montgomery, where people shed blood and tears. Our own colleague, JOHN LEWIS, was bludgeoned on that bridge, the Edmund Pettus Bridge, 50-some years ago in order to have the right to vote for all Americans.

On that day, Republicans and Democrats held hands as we crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge one more time, as JOHN LEWIS likes to say, this time on the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. We all had a Kumbaya moment, if you will, but we came back to Congress and did nothing to try to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, have we really gone so far in the last 10 years? After all, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was amended and reauthorized five times, most recently in 2006 under a Republican President, President George Bush, who was with us on that glorious day on the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery march to make sure that his support for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was there.

So I say to you, in 10 years since 2006 when we reauthorized the Voting Rights Act of 1965, overwhelmingly, in both Houses of Congress—overwhelmingly—we reauthorized the Voting Rights Act for 25 years. Had it not been for the Shelby decision which gutted section 5, which provided that preclearance formula, and made the full protections of the Voting Rights Act null and void, we would still be living under a regime where, as the gentleman so rightfully said, it was not only the Deep South States that were part of the coverage formula, but New York was part of the coverage formula as well.

So the Supreme Court, in the Shelby decision, really issued a challenge to Congress to come up with a modern-day formula. The challenge was that we shouldn't hold States like Alabama and the Deep South for past discriminations that were so long ago, back in the 1950s and the 1960s and the 1940s, but, rather, we should come up with a modern-day formula.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 does just that. I was privileged to introduce that bill along with my colleagues LINDA SÁNCHEZ and JUDY CHU; and Senator LEAHY, on the Senate side, introduced that bill. It has a lookback not since the 1950s or 1960s, but it has a lookback of 25 years, since 1990 going forward. It says that if there have been five violations, statewide violations, that a State would be, then, opted in to preclearance if they had five.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that not 1, but 13 States have had violations of voting discrimination over the last 25 years? Those States include California, New York, Arizona, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida. Thirteen States would actually fall under the rubric.

I think that it is really telling that we, in 2016, saw such long lines wrapped around Maricopa County, Arizona, most recently in March, during their Presidential election primary in March. Do you know why? Because Maricopa County used to be covered under the coverage formula for the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and since it no longer has any teeth and has been gutted, they could summarily close down polling stations.

It shouldn't surprise you, Mr. Speaker, that in 2008, Maricopa County had 800 polling stations, in 2012 it went down to 400 polling stations, and for 2016, 60 polling stations—and those 60 polling stations covered the whole county of Maricopa County, Phoenix, Arizona. It was clearly not enough to get all of the folks who wanted to vote to be able to vote. They could close down those polling stations without any advance notification because there was no more Voting Rights Act of 1965.

My own State of Alabama was one of those States that, after the Shelby decision, decided to institute a photo ID law. So many of my constituents came up to me and said: We need a photo ID to get on the plane these days. We need a photo ID to get a passport. Why shouldn't we need a photo? How is that in some way discriminatory?

I had to remind many of our constituents that so many of our elderly, especially in the rural communities that I represent, many of whom were born by midwives, don't have birth certificates and can't actually readily prove a birth certificate in order to get a photo ID law. Some seniors and those who are disabled, like my father who no longer drives, therefore, he doesn't have a driver's license. He was a nine-time stroke victim—actually, a survivor. He is still with us today.

But my dad was determined to get that photo ID in 2014 when Alabama's law came into effect. He was highly motivated, Mr. Speaker, because his daughter's name was on a ballot, and he wanted to be able to vote. I want you to know that it took my dad 5 hours to get a photo ID. Now, if that is not a barrier—you say to yourself: Five hours. Why would it take 5 hours?

Well, Dallas County Courthouse is a courthouse that actually was grandfathered into the ADA laws and so did not have to have a ramp by which people who have wheelchairs can get readily into the courthouse. It had been grandfathered in. We were very blessed to have a gentleman help us get my dad up those seven stairs into the courthouse. But when we got into the courthouse, because the voter registration was on the second floor, we had to take an elevator upstairs.

□ 2045

Lo and behold, that particular day, the one elevator bank was what?

Actually out of service. Out of service.

Now, my mom, having been a former member of the City Council in Selma and, obviously, a very well-known member of the citizens of Selma, she could go across the hall and talk to the probate judge's office and say: Look, we are here today to get this photo ID, this nondriving photo voter ID, so that my husband can vote.

It took 1½ hours, but they got someone to service that elevator. And by the time that elevator was working and we got up to the second floor, lo and behold, it was 11:30. And guess what? Lunchtime.

Now, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, we no longer have to count how many marbles are in a jar, we no longer have to recite all 67 counties in the State of Alabama in order to get a voter registration card, but we should not in America have to go through so many hoops in order to exercise the most fundamental right, the most sacred right of our democracy—the right to vote.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that any denial of access to the ballot box, to me, totally obfuscates and really undermines the integrity of the electoral process. If one person who wants to go out and vote has to stand in line for hours upon hours and can't actually physically stand in line because they have other obligations like children and day care and jobs, then it is unfair. We are actually limiting access to the ballot box, which actually goes to the integrity of our electoral process. It is fundamental to our democracy.

So I say to you tonight, I am honored to join my CBC colleagues as we fight for the opportunity of all Americans to have equal access to the ballot box.

Mr. Speaker, my State of Alabama, after having a photo ID requirement and during the State budgetary process, had the gall to actually decide to close down 30 Department of Motor Vehicle offices, which, as all of us know, the most popular form of photo ID is a driver's license. So to actually require a citizen to have a photo ID and then to close down DMV offices in rural parts of my district in the State of Alabama was really unconscionable.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Isn't it the case that a disproportionately high number of those DMV offices that the State of Alabama just happened to decide to close were in predominantly African American parts of the State of Alabama?

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. They were. Those DMV offices, as the gentleman from New York so aptly recited, were mostly located in heavily African American parts of the State of Alabama, but they were also predominantly rural parts of the State of Alabama. Those same areas have a hard time having transportation, public transportation, to get around in those areas.

They said, of course, that the reason why they were closing down these DMV offices had nothing to do with voting, of course, but had to do with the fact that there were serious budgetary restraints. Obviously, one of the consequences of the closures of those DMV offices was to limit access to those people getting photo IDs, the most popular form of photo ID, which is a driver's license, and, therefore, limiting their ability to go vote.

I did speak with our Governor, and he did open up those DMV offices on a limited basis, but only on a limited basis. And I say to you that it is unacceptable in America to have any limitations on the right to vote.

I really ask all of my colleagues, especially those who have come to Selma over the years with JOHN LEWIS on these pilgrimages, to really search deep in their hearts. If they are really about access to the ballot box and being able to make sure that all Americans have an opportunity to exercise this fundamental right, then why would we not make it easier for people to vote?

Instead of going the way of Alabama and having these photo ID laws, it seems to me that all of us should be adopting laws like the State of Oregon, which has mail-in ballots and same-day registration. There are ways that we can make it much easier for every American to exercise that most fundamental right to vote.

So tonight I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in with the 168 cosponsors of the Voting Rights Advancement Act, and join us in this fight to make sure that we do a modern-day formula, a modern-day formula, with a look back, since 1990 going forward, to look at whether or not there have been discriminatory acts that have limited people's access to the ballot box.

I also ask my colleagues to join us every Tuesday that we are in session. We have declared it to be Restoration Tuesday. And on those Tuesdays, since Tuesdays are the days that we vote, we go to the well of the floor, and we talk about why it is important to restore the vote.

So I want to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from New York and the gentlewoman from Ohio, for leading us in this charge tonight. I hope that it will spill over to tomorrow, which is Restoration Tuesday, where we can really talk about the modern-day examples of people being denied access to the ballot box because of people's inability to actually get the credentials that people require them to have, or because they have to work late. They don't have the ability to be able to drop everything and go and vote and stand in long lines if those polling stations have been closed.

I say all this to say that it is really imperative, I think, that we put real action behind our talk. We do a lot of talking about our democracy and upholding our Constitution. This is an opportunity for this august body to actually do something about it.

In closing, I want to quote one of our Republican colleagues, who has been in this fight for a very long time, Republican Congressman SENSENBRENNER from Wisconsin, who I think really best summed it up when he wrote in an op-ed in the New York Times after witnessing those long lines in Maricopa County, Arizona, the following:

''Ensuring that every eligible voter can cast a ballot without fear, deterrence, and prejudice is a basic American right. I would rather lose my job than suppress votes to keep it.''

I have to repeat that.

''I would rather lose my job than suppress votes to keep it.''

My Republican colleague went on to say:

''Our credibility as elected officials depends on the fairness of our elections.''

Mr. Speaker, voting rights transcend partisan agendas. It really solidifies that equality in voting is the Democratic way.

I ask my colleagues to join all of us in this fight, this fight for our democracy. This crisis that we are in is a crisis that we can fix in Congress by coming up with a modern-day formula.

We already have several bills in the House. Congressmen SENSENBRENNER and CONYERS introduced the Voting Rights Amendment Act. I have introduced the Voting Rights Advancement Act. There are several bills—two bills, in fact—that would actually come up with a modern-day formula. I dare this august body to actually act on one. I am here to tell you that the American people will be stronger, and this Republic will be stronger, because of it.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Alabama, my good friend, TERRI SEWELL, for a very compelling, comprehensive, and complete analysis of the situation that we find ourselves in in the practical consequences of the Supreme Court's decision. And the fact that there are people all across this country, in Alabama, and in other parts of this great Republic, who are determined to elevate themselves by suppressing the ability of others to participate in the Democratic process, that is a shame, it is a stain on our democracy, and it is time for this Congress to act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), my classmate and good friend, who himself has been championing the issue of fair redistricting, who has personally been impacted in terms of his capacity as a representative, to make sure that lines are fairly drawn, and most recently has announced the formulation of the Voting Rights Caucus here in the Congress. He has been a tremendous leader in this area. A great Member of the House of Representatives.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES from New York and Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY from Ohio for everything that they are doing on raising this issue tonight. It is very timely, considering everything that we are going through

right now. When you think about the Voting Rights Act, it is literally the single most important piece of legislation that has ever been passed in the history of the United States as it deals with an individual's right to vote.

But as you know, 3 years ago, the Supreme Court regressed and sent us back by gutting section 4 of the Voting Rights Act. Not only was that bad because it hurt the Voting Rights Act, but it was also bad because of everything that it did to propel States around the country from also retrogressing and sending us back in the area of voting rights.

You are starting to hear so many stories of States and localities that are passing more and more laws to restrict the right to vote, making it harder for young people to vote—seniors, the disabled, people that move around a lot and are transient, people that don't necessarily have the money that they need in order to obtain the proper identification.

And you heard Congresswoman SEWELL when she so eloquently talked about the fact that oftentimes, particularly in the South, people were born by midwives. We have a lot of baby boomers that are out there. People think these things happened a long time ago. That is the thing that you hear all the time. But there are people that are living here today, a lot of baby boomers, that were born down in the piney woods of east Texas, that were born in other parts of the South, that don't have the proper documentation that they need in order to be able to vote.

I have met people since I have been involved in campaigns and elections and as an elected official that didn't have the proper ID to vote. I have to tell you that there are many of them out there.

Just hours after the Supreme Court made the decision in 2013 that my home State of Texas implemented the most egregious voter ID law in the entire country, just hours after the Supreme Court gutted section 4, they moved to reimplement the law. That was very disappointing, considering that an appeals court had already said that the voter ID law in Texas was one of the worst in the country.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Isn't it a fact that the case as it relates to that particular ID law in Texas, that individuals are able to vote if they have a gun license identification card, but are not able to vote under that draconian Texas law with a college ID?

Mr. VEASEY. That is correct. If you have an ID that is issued to you by the University of Texas, or Texas A&M, or Prairie View A&M University, that same ID, that same student ID that can be used to identify yourself to campus police officers, that can be used to identify yourself for other things that you would need an ID for, it will not work in order for you to go and vote. But if you have a concealed handgun license, then you can vote. Concealed handgun licenses are mostly used by White males in the State. It is really unfair that a more diverse form of ID, like the student ID, is not allowed under Texas laws.

That was one of the reasons why I became the lead plaintiff on the voter ID lawsuit, Congressman JEFFRIES. It is Veasey v. Abbott. We are going to continue to fight. We just got news today that the Fifth Circuit Court is going to take up our case. I am going to continue to work here in Congress, continue to work in Texas, continue to work in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to protect the voting rights of individuals that have been wronged.

I also want to point out that, again, you oftentimes hear people say that we have progressed as a country and we don't need these laws. But when you look at what is going on in Texas and when you look at what is going on across the South, I just think we can't sit back anymore. We can't sit back and be idle and say: Oh, no, well, we are doing a little bit better, so these people that are going to be discriminated against—the transients, the college students, the people that don't necessarily have their birth documentation in order like other people may have—we just can't sit back and say we are going to just move on and forget about them. We have to fight for those individuals as well because it is their right to vote, and we must protect it.

In 2016, I just think we should be making it easier for citizens to vote. We should be talking about things like same-day registration. We should be working together, Democrats and Republicans, on ways to ease lines when it comes to voting in places. We should be looking at ways that we can make it to where we have more days to vote early. You are starting to hear about laws around the country to scale back the number of in-person early voting days. I just think that is wrong.

Again, I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue. I also want to thank you for pointing out that I have introduced the first Congressional Voting Rights Caucus to help aid and fight in the battle, along with so many other task forces and organizations that are here in Congress that are working on those issues.

□ 2100

We want to continue to make sure together again—and we need to do it in a bipartisan manner—that we all protect the right to vote.

I thank the gentleman and the Congresswoman from Ohio, Representative BEATTY, for their work and passion on this issue.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend for his leadership on this very important issue and for the steps that he has taken both here in Congress, with the initiation of the Voting Rights Caucus, as well as down in Texas as the lead plaintiff in the Veasey v. Abbott lawsuit to challenge the voter ID requirements—the draconian requirements—that have been imposed by the State of Texas.

It should shock the conscience of every American that a State would impose a restriction that allows licensed gun owners to vote who disproportionately happen to be of a certain demographic—white male—but would deny the legitimacy of IDs that the State of Texas itself issues.

Texas A&M, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Houston, and other institutions are all public universities, and these individuals—these students—pay tuition to go to these public universities, and, in response, they are issued identification vehicles, identification cards, but the State of Texas has seen fit to say that that is not valid in order to vote.

I think that one example—and we have heard several others—basically exposes the fact that the movement to impose voter identification requirements is fraud in itself. It is a sham.

The whole argument behind it is that: We are trying to protect the integrity of the voting system. But here is the problem: you are protecting the integrity of the voting system by imposing a solution in search of a problem because none of these individuals in any of these States has been able to produce a scintilla of evidence of fraud.

In fact, there are studies that have shown that there have been over a billion instances of Americans exercising their right to vote without any evidence of misrepresentation—over a billion times. The number of instances of questionable voting is less than 50; yet, in State after State, we see voter identification laws being imposed on the people.

It is not designed to protect the integrity of anything. It is designed to protect certain individuals and maintain their power in the face of troubling demographic changes that are occurring in America. Let's call it like it is.

Let me ask the Chair how much time we have remaining in this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, let me now yield to someone who has been a tremendous champion from the great State of Texas in representing her people in Houston and is a phenomenal member of the Judiciary Committee, Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the distinguished gentleman from New York, who shows that the issues of voter empowerment are nationwide.

Let me also thank the gentlewoman from Ohio, who has been steadfast on important issues that deal with the empowerment of all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I note that my colleague from Texas made his presentation, Congressman VEASEY, who everyone knows was the plaintiff in Texas for the voter ID law.

I wanted to come this evening very briefly to, one, submit a full statement

into the RECORD and to make this point. And let me read the headline or the topic again: Democracy in Crisis: The Reckless Republican Assault on the Right to Vote in America.

It did not have to be, for it is evident that we have dealt with voter empowerment in a bipartisan way. It is the very difficult journey that Lyndon Baines Johnson took in 1965 after the foot soldiers and Dr. Martin Luther King and others made their momentous march and statement, including a letter from a Birmingham jail that captured the history or the sentiment and the movement of the civil rights movement in the very basic words: Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

With that power behind him, he was able to frame the Voting Rights Act in a bipartisan manner with Republicans from the North and with whom we used to call Dixiecrats from the South. It can be done.

Then, in 2006 and 2007, I was privileged to have another Texan, George W. Bush, as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, after 15,000 pages of testimony with a Republican chairman, and we went and passed a vote reauthorization of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Let me close with these points about the pointedness, Mr. JEFFRIES, of what voting power actually means.

What it means is that we would not have the North Carolina set of voting laws, if you will, that cut Sunday voting or early voting. It had one of the most horrific voter ID laws.

We would not have the Texas voter ID law that disenfranchised thousands upon thousands of Hispanics because of no DPS officers—Department of Public Safety officers—in their locations.

We would not have an attempt to cut billions of dollars from food stamps and an attempt to cut trillions of dollars from education for our children and the status that we are in right now of trying to seek the full funding of the President's emergency funding of $1.9 billion for the Zika virus. This is what ''voting power'' means.

Finally, after the Supreme Court instructed the Congress or told the Congress that we needed to have a new bill, we would not have the predicament we are in now. We need voting power, and that is what voting rights are all about.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES (D–NY) and Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY (D–OH) who are anchoring this Special Order on Democracy in America and the Reckless Assault on Minority Voting Rights.

I thank all of my colleagues on the Congressional Black Caucus for their leadership on fighting back against voter suppression and holding this important special order to discuss what we can do to protect our voices and democracy.

I applaud my colleagues here today for their commitment to being the change that we all wish to see in America—today and for generations to come.

I also want to thank my colleague from Texas, Mr. VEASEY for his leadership in forming the Voting Rights Caucus. As a Vice Co-Chair, I look forward to working with the Members of this new Caucus and my colleagues of the CBC Voting Rights Task Force as we continue in this movement to elevate our voices and rights as citizens that we have long fought for and earned.

We are at a pivotal time to protect and embrace the power that we hold in restoring and maintaining our democracy.

The 2016 election season is already in full swing.

As voters in a number of states face new restrictions for the first time in a presidential election, we've already seen problems in primaries across the country.

A new photo ID requirement led to long lines in Wisconsin. A reduction in polling places forced some to wait five hours to vote in Arizona. New rules created confusion in North Carolina.

And in my home state of Texas, last minute changes to polling locations in Harris County resulted in long lines, confusion and for some, the inability to vote.

The challenge of voting in fewer polling locations without adequate notice, along with the implementation of long-contested voter ID law changes, created unnecessary and burdensome obstacles for voters in a county that is home to more minorities and non-English speaking residents than that of greater state of Texas or the nation.

In a county that ranks third in the nation in terms of population, critical changes impacting the ability of individuals to exercise their right to vote must be reviewed to ensure that any violation of federal law is addressed and corrected.

This could be an early glimpse of problems in November—as voters face the first presidential election in 50 years without the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, which was designed to prevent discrimination in voting.

In 2016, 17 states will have restrictive voting laws in effect for the first time in a presidential election.

Restrictions in most of these 17 were passed before this year.

The new measures range from strict photo ID requirements to early voting cutbacks to registration restrictions.

Those 17 states are: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

We cannot afford to turn back the clock—we must continue to forge ahead and push back against these egregious and painful laws.

The Voting Rights Act is still needed.

Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but could not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymying the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did not eliminate entirely.

Or as Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stated in her dissent of the Court's ruling:

> Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.

As stated by my predecessor, Barbara Jordan, a civil rights and voting rights icon and a woman of many firsts—I know that perhaps the greatest and most important battle to be fought is on behalf of the right to vote, the most precious right of all because it is a preservative and passage of all other rights.

We must be vigilant in this movement to elevate our voices and rights as citizens that we have long fought for and earned.

Fifty years ago, America was preparing for the first national election following passage of the Voting Rights Act—the crucial legislation for which Martin Luther King, Jr. and civil rights activists toiled for years.

Today, we're preparing for our first election in half a century in which these essential voter protections will not be available.

Voting rights were ascendant in 1966—today voter suppression tactics are spreading throughout the nation.

Congress was increasingly an ally in 1966—now in 2016, it's conspicuously absent.

Regressive state voter suppression laws—including Voter ID laws, Voter caging, elimination of polling places, elimination of early or Sunday voting, refusal to locate sites in low-income areas, last-minute changes to polling locations—are the clear culprits.

In the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court's disastrous Shelby ruling—which eliminated the requirement that areas with histories of discrimination receive preclearance for any changes to voting laws—there was hope that Congress would act to mitigate the damage.

But those hopes have been diminished.

There has been no Congressional action to repair the VRA to date.

At face value, a voter ID law might not look as egregious as a poll tax.

But, considering the hurdles that they present—including the need to procure a birth certificate or visit a far-away DMV during severely-limited operating hours—the obstacles are comparable.

These laws are especially prohibitive for elderly or low-income people who have difficulty traveling.

Recent studies reveal that state voter suppression could stop approximately 1.3 million from voting in competitive election states.

Thirty-six states have promulgated new laws that disproportionately impact minority citizens in response to fabricated issue of ''voter impersonation.''

Sixteen of these states will see their plans go into effect for the first time in the 2016 elections.

An analysis by Nate Silver for the New York Times shows that these laws can decrease turnout by between 0.8 and 2.4 percent—a potentially decisive amount in highly competitive elections.

As The Nation's Ari Berman and others have methodically reported, the efforts to suppress votes through Voter ID laws, the purging of voter rolls, and the elimination of polling places are already having their impacts.

The 2016 primaries have been marked by long lines in several states and severe hurdles to voting.

According to Ari Berman, voters disenfranchised by new laws include: a man born in a German concentration camp who lost his birth certificate in a fire; a woman who lost use of her hands but was not allowed to

use her daughter as power of attorney at the DMV; and a 90-year-old veteran of Iwo Jima, who was not allowed to vote with his Veterans ID.

We need to translate widespread outrage about voter suppression into momentum for an actionable voting rights agenda.

While proponents of voter ID laws point constantly to a looming ''crisis'' of voter impersonation to justify barriers to accessing the polls, they've yet to demonstrate empirical evidence. Where is the proof?

We now have empirical evidence, gathered from academic experts at University of California at San Diego and other leading institutions, that voter suppression laws disproportionately impact minorities and immigrants.

Fixing the VRA is just the start of the fight to secure voting rights.

We must also deal with issues including aging and insecure voting machines, problems with absentee ballots, willful misinformation, felon disenfranchisement, partisan election administration, untrained election staff, and many others.

As we know, the Voting Rights Act is one of the most fundamental pieces of American legislation, designed to prevent the disenfranchisement of black and minority voters by prohibiting voting practices and procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

In signing the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson said:

> The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.

Since its passage in 1965, and through four reauthorizations signed by Republican presidents (1970, 1975, 1982, 2006), more Americans, especially those in the communities we represent, have been empowered by the Voting Rights Act than any other single piece of legislation.

Section 5 of the Act requires covered jurisdictions to submit proposed changes to any voting law or procedure to the Department of Justice or the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. for pre-approval, hence the term ''preclearance.''

Under Section 5, the submitting jurisdiction has the burden of proving that the proposed change(s) are not retrogressive, i.e. that they do not have the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color.

In announcing his support for the 1982 extension of the Voting Rights Act, President Reagan said, ''the right to vote is the crown jewel of American liberties.''

And Section 5 is the ''crown jewel'' of the Voting Rights Act.

But a terrible blow was dealt to the Voting Rights Act on June 25, 2013, when the Supreme Court handed down the decision in Shelby County v. Holder, 537 U.S. 193 (2013), which invalidated Section 4(b), the provision of the law determining which jurisdictions would be subject to Section 5 ''pre-clearance.''

In 2006, the City of Calera, which lies within Shelby County, Alabama, enacted a discriminatory redistricting plan without complying with Section 5, leading to the loss of the city's sole African-American councilman, Ernest Montgomery.

In compliance with Section 5, however, the City of Calera was required to draw a non-discriminatory redistricting plan and conduct another election in which Mr. Montgomery regained his seat.

In 2010, Shelby County filed suit in federal court in Washington, D.C., seeking to have Section 5 declared unconstitutional.

In 2011, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia upheld the constitutionality of Section 5, holding that Congress acted appropriately in 2006 when it reauthorized the statute.

And in 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit affirmed the district court ruling by a vote of two to one.

However, on June 25, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which sets out the formula that is used to determine which state and local governments must comply with Section 5's preapproval requirement, is unconstitutional and can no longer be used.

Thus, although the Court did not invalidate Section 5, it will have no actual effect unless and until Congress can enact a new statute to determine who should be covered by it.

According to the Supreme Court majority, the reason for striking down Section 4(b): ''Times change.''

Now, the Court was right; times have changed. But what the Court did not fully appreciate is that the positive changes it cited are due almost entirely to the existence and vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

And that is why the Voting Rights Act is still needed.

Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but could not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymying the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did not eliminate entirely.

Or as Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stated in her dissent of the Court's ruling:

> Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.

Before the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965, the right to vote did not exist in practice for most African Americans.

And until 1975, most American citizens who were not proficient in English faced significant obstacles to voting, because they could not understand the ballot.

Even though the Indian Citizenship Act gave Native Americans the right to vote in 1924, state law determined who could actually vote, which effectively excluded many Native Americans from political participation for decades.

Asian Americans and Asian immigrants also suffered systematic exclusion from the political process.

In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were approximately 300 African-Americans in public office, including just three in Congress. Few, if any, black elected officials were elected anywhere in the South.

Because of the Voting Rights Act, there are now more than 10,000 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever.

The Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many other minorities, including over 6,000 Latino elected officials and almost 1,000 Asian American elected officials.

Native Americans and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

Aided by Section 5, the Voting Rights Act was successful in preventing the states with the worst and most egregious records of voter suppression and intimidation from disenfranchising minority voters.

So successful in fact that the Supreme Court apparently saw no harm in invalidating the provision that subjected those states to the federal supervision responsible for the success it celebrated.

Now to be sure, the Supreme Court did not invalidate the preclearance provisions of Section 5; it only invalidated Section 4(b).

But that is like leaving the car undamaged but destroying the key that unlocks the doors and starts the engine.

According to the Court, the coverage formula in Section 4(b) had to be struck down because the data upon which it was based—registration rates and turn-out gaps—was too old and outdated.

But my colleagues in Congress and I refused to let the Voting Rights Act die—as states all across the nation had already begun implementing restrictive voting laws that would keep thousands of citizens away from the polls.

After months of hard work, consultation, negotiation, and collaboration, we were able to produce the ''Voting Rights Amendment Act'' which sets out to achieve these goals.

I was an original cosponsor when this bill was first introduced in 2014 (H.R. 3899), and again when it was reintroduced in 2015 (H.R. 885).

To be sure, this legislation is not perfect, no bill ever is.

But—and this is important—the bill represents an important step forward because it: is responsive to the concern expressed by the Supreme Court; and establishes a new coverage formula that is carefully tailored but sufficiently potent to protect the voting rights of all Americans.

First, the Voting Rights Amendment Act specifies a new coverage formula that is based on current problems in voting and therefore directly responds to the Court's concern that the previous formula was outdated.

The importance of this feature is hard to overestimate. Legislators and litigators understand that the likelihood of the Court upholding an amended statute that fails to correct the provision previously found to be defective is very low and indeed.

The Voting Rights Amendment Act replaces the old ''static'' coverage formula with a new dynamic coverage formula, or ''rolling trigger,'' which works as follows:

For states, it requires at least one finding of discrimination at the state level and at least four adverse findings by its sub-jurisdictions within the previous 15 years;

For political subdivisions, it requires at least three adverse findings within the previous 15 years; but

Political subdivisions with ''persistent and extremely low a minority voter turnout,'' can also be covered if they have a single adverse finding of discrimination.

The effect of the ''rolling trigger'' mechanism effectively gives the legislation nationwide reach because any state and any jurisdiction

in any state potentially is subject to being covered if the requisite number of violations are found to have been committed.

Prior to Shelby Co. v. Holder, the Voting Rights Act covered 16 states in whole or in part, including most of the states in the Deep South.

The states that would be covered initially under the new bill are: Texas, North Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina.

To compensate for the fact that fewer jurisdictions are covered, our bill also includes several key provisions that are consistent with the needs created by a narrower Section 5 trigger.

For example, the Voting Rights Amendment Act:

Expands judicial ''bail-in'' authority under Section 3 so that it applies to voting changes that result in discrimination (not just intentional discrimination);

Requires nationwide transparency of ''late breaking'' voting changes; allocation of poll place resources; and changes within the boundaries of voting districts;

Clarifies and expands the ability of plaintiffs to seek a preliminary injunction against voting discrimination; and

Clarifies and expands Attorney General's authority to send election observers to protect against voting discrimination.

This bipartisan compromise legislation is not ideal—but on the balance, it represents a step forward as we continue to fight for enforcement of our most fundamental right: the right to vote.

Additional measures introduced to help protect and enforce our right to vote include the Voter Empowerment Act and the Coretta Scott King Mid-Decade Redistricting Prohibition Act.

The Voting Empowerment Act was introduced to help ensure equal access to the ballot for every eligible voter.

The Voting Empowerment Act was designed to protect voters from suppression, deception and other forms of disenfranchisement by modernizing voter registration, promoting access to voting for individuals with disabilities, and protecting the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for Federal office.

This legislation would expand and protect citizens' access to the polls and would increase accountability and integrity among elected officials and poll workers.

It would also expand eligibility to allow all ex-offenders who have been released from prison (even those who may still be on probation on parole) the opportunity to register and vote in federal elections.

Outlined in 13 Title sections, this bill prioritizes access, integrity and accountability for voters.

I have also introduced H.R. 75 (originally introduced in 2013 as H.R. 2490) which prohibits any state whose congressional districts have been redistricted after a decennial census from carrying out another redistricting until after the next decennial census, unless a court requires such state to conduct a subsequent redistricting to comply with the Constitution or enforce the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is no ordinary piece of legislation.

For millions of Americans, and many of us in Congress, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things.

Please know that I am as committed to the preservation of the Voting Rights Act and I will not rest until the job is done.

As I stated in 2006, during the historic debate in Congress to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965:

> I stand today an heir of the Civil Rights Movement, a beneficiary of the Voting Rights Act. I would be breaking faith with those who risked all and gave all to secure for my generation the right to vote if I did not do all I can to strengthen the Voting Rights Act so that it will forever keep open doors that shut out so many for so long.

With these legislative priorities and principles at the forefront, I intend to work with my colleagues and advocates to do all I can to protect the voting rights of all Americans.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman.

The right to vote is fundamental to the integrity of our democracy, and, as Lyndon Baines Johnson said from this very Chamber shortly before the Voting Rights Act was passed into law a few months later, ''We shall overcome.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

1–YEAR ANNIVERSARY FOR JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for the remaining time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the Majority Leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be allowed 5 days to file remarks and revise and extend those remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, May 29, marks the 1-year anniversary for the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act being signed into law, or the JVTA, as we refer to it.

This is a vital piece of legislation that the House and Senate passed and that was signed by the President a year ago that takes this scourge of human slavery that is taking place internationally, but also here in the United States, and Congress weighs in on this to deal with this issue, I think, in a very good way.

It is impressive to me as a Member of the House how many Members of Congress on both sides were involved in drafting legislation over a year ago that came to the House and passed. In the House itself, there were 11 pieces of legislation that dealt with sex trafficking. All of those bills came up to the House floor in the same week, and all of them passed with overwhelming numbers.

They went down the hallway to the U.S. Senate. The Senate combined those bills into one bill, and it passed that legislation. It came back to the House, we passed that, and it was signed by the President. I want to thank all of those Members of Congress—Republicans and Democrats—who worked on this.

Just by way of background, I got involved in this issue in several ways. One way was when I was in Eastern Europe several years ago and found out about the human trafficking, sex trafficking, and labor trafficking that was taking place in Eastern Europe and how young women were lured into thinking they were going to get a better job—or have a job—in Africa and the next thing they knew they were in sex slavery in northern Africa. Most of those women just disappeared over the years.

Then, back here in the United States, we have the problem of the crime and the scourge of trafficking, and it happens in two areas. There is international sex trafficking into the United States. About 20 percent of the trafficking here in America is international, primarily coming from the southern border.

You see those drug traffickers, those drug dealers, who come across the southern border of Texas. They bring anybody into the United States, and they will do anything for money.

They will bring young girls, young women, and traffic them into the United States and turn them over to the criminal gangs, like the MS–13 gang, and then they are trafficked throughout the United States.

That is about 20 percent of the trafficking. The other 80 percent is trafficking by domestic or young girls, young women. They are trafficked throughout the United States in the same crime—sex slavery, sex trafficking.

I had an opportunity to meet a lot of these trafficking victims in my work as chairman and co-chairman with JIM COSTA of the Crime Victims Caucus. I will tell you about three of those, and those three women helped get the minds straight of Members of Congress on this issue that is taking place.

''T,'' as her nickname is, was in foster care. She spent 18 years of her life in foster care. In foster care, she was abused, treated like an animal, hardly fed by some of the individuals who were in the foster care system. All she wanted was a family, someone to love and care for her.

She met an older boy, and that individual made her feel special. He promised to love her and take care of her. But as soon as she left with him, she became a sex slave, and her innocence was crushed. She was sold around the country in massage parlors, strip clubs, in hotels, and on the Internet. She was treated like property for 7 years, Mr. Speaker.

I mentioned that she was in foster care. We now understand that about two-thirds of the sex trafficking victims in the United States, at some