

Columbia River In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites along the Columbia River.

This legislation calls for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to conduct a much-needed assessment of current conditions at the In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access sites under BIA ownership on both sides of the Columbia, in coordination with the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Yakama Nation. It authorizes the BIA to improve existing federal structures and infrastructure, improve sanitation and safety conditions, and increase access to electricity, sewer, and water infrastructure. BIA may contract with tribes and tribal organizations to conduct this important work that will lay a critical foundation for the construction of permanent tribal housing.

Congress must do more to help members of these four tribes who reside here after being displaced by decades ago by the construction of the Columbia River Dams and who never received the permanent replacement housing that was promised to them by the federal government. Those tribes have a treaty-protected right to fish along the river at their usual and accustomed places that must be respected.

I will continue to work with federal partners and tribal nations to see that the need for more permanent housing is fulfilled and tribal member's treaty rights are respected. In the meantime, Congress must improve the living conditions for the affected treaty tribe members, and we must pass this bill.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. CLAY HIGGINS

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 3, 2019*

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted on Roll Call No. 1.

#### INTRODUCTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ELIMINATE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND PROVIDE FOR THE DIRECT ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 3, 2019*

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of a constitutional amendment I introduced today to eliminate the electoral college and provide for the direct election of our nation's President and Vice President.

As Founding Father Thomas Jefferson said, "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might well as require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized

society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

In 2016, for the second time in recent memory, and for the fifth time in our history, the national popular vote winner did not become President because of the Electoral College. This has happened twice to candidates from Tennessee: Al Gore and Andrew Jackson.

The reason is because the Electoral College, established to prevent an uninformed citizenry from directly electing our nation's President, no longer fits our nation's needs.

When the Founders established the Electoral College, it was in an era of limited nationwide communication. The electoral structure was premised on a theory that citizens would have a better chance of knowing about electors from their home states than about presidential candidates from out-of-state. Electors were supposed to be people of good judgment who were trusted with picking a qualified President and Vice President on behalf of the people. They held the responsibility of choosing a President because it was believed that the general public could not be properly informed of the candidates and the values each held.

That notion—that citizens should be prevented from directly electing the President—is antithetical to our understanding of democracy today, and our electoral process has not evolved to match our abilities to communicate, collect information, and make informed decisions about candidates. The development of mass media and the internet has made information about presidential candidates easily accessible to U.S. citizens across the country and around the world. The people no longer need the buffer of the electoral college to be knowledgeable about and decide who will be president. Today, citizens have a far better chance of knowing about out-of-state presidential candidates than knowing about presidential electors from their home states. Most people do not even know who their electors are.

While our ability to communicate has evolved so has the Electoral College, but not in a positive way. Electors are now little more than rubber stamps who are chosen based on their political parties and who represent the interests of those political parties, rather than representing the people. Most states legally bind their electors to vote for whomever wins that state's popular vote, so electors can no longer exercise individual judgment when selecting a candidate.

In our country, "We the People," are supposed to determine who represents us in elective office. Yet, we use an anachronistic process for choosing who will hold the highest offices in the land.

It is time for us to fix this, and that is why I have introduced this amendment today.

Since our nation first adopted our Constitution, "We the People," have amended it repeatedly to expand the opportunity for citizens to directly elect our leaders:

The 15th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens to vote, regardless of race.

The 19th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens to vote, regardless of gender.

The 26th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens 18 years of age and older to vote.

And the 17th Amendment empowers citizens to directly elect U.S. Senators.

We need to amend our Constitution to empower citizens to directly elect the President and the Vice President of the United States.

Working together, I know we can make our Constitution better reflect the "more perfect Union" to which it aspires.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE 110TH BIRTHDAY OF IRENE MILLER

### HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 3, 2019*

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mrs. Irene Miller she who turned 110 years young on December 28, 2018.

Mrs. Miller has been a lifelong resident of New Bedford, Massachusetts. When asked about her growing up, she reminisced about her favorite childhood activities, sliding down Weld Street whenever it snowed and playing hopscotch. She married her first boyfriend and together they celebrated over fifty years of marriage. They went on to have two children, Paul and Marcia, and a continually growing family. Mrs. Miller now lives with her grandson.

Born in 1908, Mrs. Miller has lived through countless historical events, including eight of the nine World Series victories of her beloved Red Sox. In her free time, she loves to read and is described by friends as an absolute joy who brings happiness to everyone around her. She is known as "everyone's grandma," treating all her friends like family, and for her wit, humor, and laughter.

To celebrate her 110th birthday, she wishes for everyone to be happy, which is how she lives each day. We could all benefit by learning from Mrs. Miller's approach to life.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Irene Miller for a lifetime spent making her community a better place. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing her a happy birthday and many more years of health and happiness.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF RETIRED MISSISSIPPI JUDGE CHARLIE BRETT

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 3, 2019*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Judge Charlie Brett. Judge Brett, a native of Lee County, Mississippi, is retiring after a long and distinguished career.

Upon graduation from Kosciusko High School, Judge Brett attended Mississippi State University where he graduated in 1968. Following his graduation, Judge Brett answered the call to serve his country and joined the United States Army where he served from 1969 to 1971. He then attended the University of Mississippi Law School where he earned his Juris Doctorate. During Judge Brett's time at law school he received several honors and served on the Moot Court Board.

This was the beginning of Judge Brett's long career. He served four years as the Prosecutor for the City of Tupelo and fourteen years as Lee County Prosecuting Attorney and Youth Court Prosecutor. Judge Brett has