

are not talking about the election of 2000. I believe that that is an issue that should be a priority for America, as well as it is for us to appreciate and commemorate and celebrate our Constitution. The right to vote is fundamental, and so I intend tonight and tomorrow to offer two pieces of legislation, one to establish a national holiday for Americans to vote during a Presidential year and, secondarily, an act that will study the issue of how do we design a system that counts every vote and allows every American to vote, the Secure Democracy Act.

Those legislative initiatives will substitute for H.R. 60 and H.R. 62. We will establish a generic national holiday every 4 years so Americans who work every day will have the privilege and opportunity for expressing their choices and their rights to express the decision of who will be President and who will be elected to this body in the coming years.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the importance for ensuring the right to vote is a fundamental right guaranteed to every citizen of the United States. Many people were denied this fundamental right in the past presidential election partly because they were unable to vote due to work commitments.

The bill I am introducing tonight will substantially resolve this serious issue raised by last year's presidential election, the lack of time for people to vote or participate in the very important federal election process, due to employment commitments that keep many Americans from voting or acting as election day officials.

I firmly believe that the United States Constitution is not just there to protect me or people who agree with me, but it is there to also ensure that those who do not share my view also have equal access to the tools of democracy. My legislation would establish a National Election Day on the 2nd Tuesday of November, in presidential election years as a legal public holiday. I am now lending my full support to this new bill instead of H.R. 62, which I previously filed. I am now also removing my complete support from H.R. 62.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will forge a strong commitment to Democracy at home and abroad by making substantive changes to how future presidential elections must work in order to avoid the problems of the last presidential election.

It is my opinion that the larger threat to our national identity as a democracy and the sense of well being that Americans once had about the election process is the acceptance of a belief that citizens of this country do not have a voice in its governance. This is the greatest Achilles Heel that this nation has ever faced. Throughout history many nations and governments have ceased to exist because they failed to fulfill the true mission of gov-

ernment, which is to be responsive to the needs of citizens.

For this reason, I am introducing legislation to establish a National Election Day as a legal public holiday to ensure that the fundamental right to vote that is granted to every citizen of the United States is adhered to. I am asking my colleagues in Congress for their support in meeting the voting challenges that have been presented to our growing and diverse nation.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PLATTS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last month we praised our forefathers in observance of Presidents' Day and we also praised the contributions of African Americans in the development and continuation of this country. This month, as women's history gets underway, I rise to recognize some of our foremothers; women who dared to be first, who strove for equality and social justice for all; women who not only broke ceilings but shattered spheres in pursuit of rights that should have been inalienable; women whose contributions continue to pave the way and to inspire others.

Mr. Speaker, I am from Chicago, a city rich in women pioneers and trailblazers, both past and present. One such individual is Ida B. Wells who founded the first black female suffrage club in Illinois, as well as the first kindergarten in a black neighborhood. Wells was born in 1862, was a slave for the first 6 months of her life, and spent the remainder of her life fighting for civil and economic rights for African Americans.

Declaring that one had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or rat in a trap, Wells crusaded against lynching and segregation until her death in 1931.

Labor activist Sylvia Woods was a pioneer in civil rights. During World War II, she led the Union organization at Bendix Aviation. She spent much of the 1940s organizing United Auto Workers Local 330 and formulating the UAW resolution against sex discrimination. Following the war, she assisted women

who were laid off in Chicago and cofounded the National Alliance Against Racism.

However, at present there are future history-makers that are making an impact on the lives of the citizens of Chicago and the Nation. Exemplary individuals from today include Addie Wyatt, Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow, Dr. Johnnie Coleman and Mrs. Mamie Bone.

Reverend Addie Wyatt has the distinction of having had active involvement with the three major movements of the 20th Century, labor, civil rights and women's rights. Her leadership roles in labor were international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and she broke ground as the first female local union president of the United Packing House and Allied Workers, and as international vice president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. Her founding roles in Operation Breadbasket and Operation PUSH, as well as her work with Martin Luther King, Jr., illustrate her commitment to civil rights. Her involvement in the women's movement has also generated a number of noteworthy achievements.

Reverend Wyatt is a founding member of the National Organization for Women, was even appointed by Eleanor Roosevelt to serve on the Labor Legislation Committee of the Commission on the Status of Women.

During her distinguished career, she advised Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Carter and other important leaders on causes. She and her husband Claude currently serve as pastors emeritus of the Vernon Park Church of God in Chicago.

Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow is the co-chair of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and is well-known for breaking barriers in a male-dominated profession. She is an ordained minister and on the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women in Illinois.

Another fine citizen is the Reverend Dr. Johnnie Coleman. Sometimes referred to as the first lady of the religious community, she is the founder-minister of Christ Universal Church where 4,000 people go to hear her words of wisdom and healing every Sunday.

To her credit, Reverend Coleman has several organizations in Chicago, the Universal Foundation for Better Living, Inc.; the Johnnie Coleman Institute; and the Johnnie Coleman Academy and a book of teachings entitled *Open Your Mind and Be Healed*.

Ms. Mamie Bone, as chairperson of the Central Advisory Council for the Chicago Housing Authority, fights regularly for residents. She serves as a member of the CHA Board of Commissioners and continues to champion the employment security and safety of public housing residents.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to just highlight the activities and the involvement of Margaret