

HONORING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF
PASSAGE OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT
OF 1964

SPEECH OF
HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

First, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. NORTON, for introducing House Resolution 676, which recognizes and honors the 40th anniversary of congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and for her work in getting this bill on the House floor today.

H. Res. 676 recognizes the advancements we have made in the 40 years since the Civil Rights Act was passed, and reaffirms the work we need to do, not only to retain what progress has been made, but also to continue to move toward greater social existence and inclusion.

But I want to take a step back for a moment and trace some of the history that led up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Many of us can remember what it was like in America back in the tumultuous era of the 1960's. It was a time of social unrest marked by riots and protests across the country.

Growing up in this era, we were all galvanized by the passion and commitment of our civil rights leaders who worked to end America's immoral practice of discrimination.

The 1960's and the decades preceding were marked by unprecedented resistance to racial segregation and discrimination captured by the 'freedom rides' throughout the south, the Lunch counter sit-ins, forced school integration in segregated schools, Supreme Court cases challenging Jim Crow practices and the individual stances that our parents took at their jobs and in their neighborhoods.

Here in Washington, A. Phillip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, along with a young activist from Georgia by the name of JOHN LEWIS, coordinated and organized a non-violent march on Washington on August 28, 1963 bringing more than 200,000 people to the Nation's Capital to hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and other speakers and to demand the dignity, justice, and jobs that were promised by the government, and to have their economic and political concerns heard.

To be Black in America at the time meant you had no voice in the government, could not attend good schools, could not get good jobs, and in short, could not live a free life.

For over 100 years after slavery was abolished, Blacks and other minority groups were relegated to second class citizenship.

And because of all these facts, the March on Washington was nothing short of revolutionary in the precedent it set as the culmination of a national social movement.

But the real test of the movement was whether it could accomplish change.

As Bayard Rustin wrote of the March in his magazine, *Liberation* in 1963:

"What counted most at the Lincoln Memorial was not the speeches, eloquent as they were, but the pledge of a quarter million Americans, black and white, to carry the civil rights revolution into the streets. Our task is now to fulfill this pledge through nonviolent uprisings in hundreds of cities."

It was on February 10, 1964 that Congress finally passed an unprecedented and highly contentious bill to support and protect the civil liberties and rights of all people.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 in many ways turned a new page on the history of our nation, and all people, regardless of race, class or gender, were acknowledged as equal citizens of our nation.

Signed into law on July 2, 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed segregation in businesses such as theaters, restaurants, and hotels.

It banned discriminatory practices in employment and ended segregation in public places such as swimming pools, libraries, and other public facilities.

And while it is often misconceived that the Civil Rights Act only affected the lives of Black Americans in the 1960s, this landmark legislation also protected the rights of women for the first time in history.

But as we all know, by itself the legislation could not transform the hearts and minds of those who truly believed in segregation. Only time could truly do that.

Yet the injustices that Blacks and other minorities faced with the tacit approval of the government were finally over.

But today our March, our struggle, and our cause are not over.

Today we are still attempting to understand and counteract the ramifications of the physical and mental enslavement which our ancestors were subjected to.

Profound inequalities remain imbedded in American society.

For example, black women are less likely to have breast cancer, but are more likely to die from this terrible disease because of the discrepancies in our health care system.

And according to the AFL-CIO, the average 25-year-old working woman will lose more than \$523,000 due to unequal pay during her working life.

Facts such as these indicate that our work is far from complete.

Our Nation's capital, the icon of our collective American legacy pays sparse tribute to the African forefathers of this country and our Civil Rights leaders.

Despite the fact that this country was built on the backs of slaves, there are few commemorative statues or paintings that demonstrate as much.

Perhaps most glaringly, there is still no national memorial dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on our National Mall.

And in this day and age, it is even more important that we continue to fight for our civil right and civil liberties, especially in light of the Patriot Act.

The resolution we are discussing today not only recognizes how far our country has come along, but it also praises the sweat and blood that was sacrificed to make sure that we got here.

This commemorative resolution is a testament to the shift in this country toward the spirit of inclusion and equality.

It also reminds us of how much we have left to do.

Our great society is highly regarded around the globe because of our laws, which ensure the integrity of our constitution and perpetuate the belief that all men and women are created equal.

The legacies of those who marched, protested, and died for our cause capture the true

sentiment of our nation. By passing this resolution we continue to commemorate their struggle, our struggle.

It is the ultimate sacrifice of individuals like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., from which we all benefit.

We must honor their memory by continuing to work to realize their vision.

And today we will honor their memory by passing this resolution.

RECOGNIZING THE EIGHTIETH
BIRTHDAY OF GOVERNOR PHIL
HOFF

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 25, 2004

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, it is a very great personal pleasure to extend best wishes on his eightieth birthday to Governor Philip H. Hoff of Vermont.

During my own years of service to Vermont, I have found no finer example, no better counselor, no more steadfast friend, than Phil Hoff, the Governor of Vermont from 1962 to 1969.

Educated at Williams College and Cornell University, Phil Hoff ran for Governor of Vermont in 1962. His was an uphill battle: Although Democrat William Meyer had been elected to one term in the U.S. House in 1958, no Democrat had won the governorship in the state of Vermont since before the Civil War. Vermont was steadfastly, resolutely, a one-party state, even resisting national plebiscites for Democratic candidates, standing alone with Utah in voting for William Taft in the Woodrow Wilson victory in 1912, alone with Maine in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt landslide in 1936.

With energy, vision and a great personal warmth that touched voters deeply, Phil Hoff boldly took a simple message to Vermont's citizens: It was time for a change. And people listened, and agreed. Phil Hoff was elected Governor of Vermont in 1962 by defeating the incumbent chief executive, F. Ray Keyser Jr. His vigor was put in service of his dual linked commitments, to social justice and to making those changes that would bring it about. During the next six years, everything in Vermont was changed, opened up, made more responsive to the people, reshaped in the visionary spirit of those exciting times of growth and renewed democracy. With Phil Hoff as governor, it seemed anything was possible: Stale tradition, entrenched power, historical limitations, all gave way to the bold vision and active involvement of this remarkable human being.

While we have many differences, many different points of view, in our state, for many years Vermont has been to people all over America a beacon for what politics can be. Here, ideological conservatism does not rule, nor narrow self-interest, nor recriminations of one group against another. Our political figures far more often than not speak out on the side of justice and fairness. That is the legacy of Phil Hoff, who not only governed our state but left a legacy that ever afterwards politics would be about inclusion and not exclusion, about moving confidently into the future rather than cowering in the shadow of the past.

Phil Hoff kept up an active life in the public sector, serving in more recent years as a Vermont State Senator, as a Trustee and