

DISCRIMINATE AGAINST
LANGUAGE MINORITY CITIZENS?

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Stearns Amendment (#21). The amendment prohibits the Department expending any funds to fulfill Section 203—the Bilingual Election Assistance Provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As a representative of one of the many multiethnic districts in New York, I am fully conscious of the need to provide bilingual assistance to our language minorities and allow all our citizens the chance to participate in the democratic process. Thus far, bilingual election assistance has facilitated voting for over 200,000 Asian Americans nationwide, and caused a 50 percent increase in the Hispanic electorate in the first decade of the adoption of this provision.

The right to vote is a fundamental characteristic of a healthy democracy. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act gives opportunities to enable every American citizen to exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately, despite our laws, many minority voters face impediments to voting. The Stearns Amendment makes Section 203 ineffectual, removing oversight from states and localities who would be free to discriminate against tax-paying American citizens and impeding their right to vote. We can spend billions of dollars to spread democracy in Iraq but we are refusing funding to give our citizens the right to vote.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) objects to the cost incurred to provide bilingual election assistance. The Oversight Hearing of the Voting Rights Act: Section 203—Bilingual Election Assistance, Part II, before the Subcommittee on Constitution, under the House Judiciary committee, revealed that 90 percent of the jurisdictions reported (in a national survey) that bilingual election assistance made up only an average of 3 percent of total election costs. Forty percent of the jurisdictions reported no extra cost for bilingual election assistance, rendering any cost-related objection to implementation of Section 203 groundless.

Eliminating Section 203 is the same as discriminating against our citizens based on their language capability. I urge my colleagues to oppose this attempt to disenfranchise American citizens. Let us not return to the era of the Jim Crow laws. As Mr. JOHN LEWIS said, "The arguments of the opponents of Section 203 are suspiciously similar to the arguments once employed for literacy tests to disenfranchise African American voters." We cannot allow a repeat of such history.

The VRA, considered by many as the most successful civil rights legislation in the country, has played a vital role in integrating all our citizens in the democratic process. Instead of proposing amendments that weaken this legislation, we must work together to immediately ensure the renewal of its expiring provisions. H.R. 9, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendment Act of 2006, has come out of the House Judiciary Committee with a favorable voting margin of 33–1, in a rare show of bipartisanship. Let us not delay the efforts to pass this bill that has had such

an important and successful effect in safeguarding the right to vote for all our citizens.

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL BRANDON
M. HARDY, U.S. MARINE CORPS,
OF COCHRANVILLE, PA

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor Corporal Brandon M. Hardy of Cochranville, Pennsylvania, who laid down his life for his country.

At the age of 10, Brandon watched on television as the U.S. military liberated the people of Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm. This was his inspiration to dedicate his own life to serving his country. And that's what he did.

In July of 1999, directly after graduating from Octorara Area High School, Brandon enlisted in the United States Air Force. After serving for 5 years in the Air Force, Brandon joined the Marines and was sent to Iraq. On April 28 of this year, Brandon lost his life while conducting combat operations in Iraq.

Brandon Hardy understood what it means to live a life with purpose. He served a cause greater than himself. He served the cause of liberty. He gave his life so that we might be safer, and so 26 million Iraqis might have the chance to live in freedom.

In May, I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq, and each Iraqi official I met with—from the Prime Minister down to a local police chief—thanked America for sacrificing so much on Iraq's behalf. They deeply understand the difference that men and women like Brandon Hardy have made for Iraq and for the world. And we at home know that the Global War on Terror is being waged to keep us safe, as well. Marine Corporal Brandon Hardy served others and gave back to his country, and his life made a tremendous difference in the world because of it.

As an airman, Brandon served in supply management, and he completed his service with the Air Force as a staff sergeant on July 6, 2004. Brandon further demonstrated his dedication to defending our Nation when he re-enlisted in the military—but, this time, with the Marine Corps on January 19, 2005. On June 3, 2005, Brandon graduated from Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Parris Island, South Carolina. He was assigned to the Hawaii-based 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment as an amphibious assault vehicle crewman and was promoted to corporal on April 1, 2006.

The 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion's mission is "to transport the surface assault elements of the landing force from amphibious shipping to inland objectives during the amphibious assault and to provide support to mechanized operations ashore. The amphibious assault vehicles are primarily utilized to transport personnel in tactical operations." The battalion is part of the 1st Marine Division, a multi-role, expeditionary ground combat force, that provides fully trained units and personnel to support Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and other objectives in the Global War on Terrorism.

On April 28, 2006, Brandon made the supreme sacrifice for his country. He was killed

while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar Province in Iraq when his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

Brandon earned a number of awards throughout his career in both the Air Force and Marine Corps, which demonstrates his professionalism and outstanding ability as an airman and a Marine. His awards include an Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Medal with Valor, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, a Purple Heart (death), and an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

May God grant to Brandon's family and his fiancée the peace that passes all understanding. My prayers and most heartfelt gratitude go out to them, and I offer them my deepest condolences. I am humbled by the dedicated service and sacrifice of their loved one, Corporal Brandon Hardy. Brandon joins the revered ranks of the many thousands of men and women throughout American history who have gone before him in battle to secure the liberty of the United States of America. He is an inspiration to us all.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO AMANDA
TRUMPETER

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, hundreds of students compete in the Congressional Art Competition in my district. I would like to take this time to honor Amanda Trumpeter of Chatfield High School. Her winning artwork will be on display with hundreds of her peers' artwork from around the country.

Ms. Trumpeter is outstanding student in both arts and academics. She has been accepted into the Advanced Placement teacher cadet program as well as being on Honor Roll. Ms. Trumpeter has also served as the President of the National Art Honor Society.

Ms. Trumpeter has is a proud recipient of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design summer expressions pre-college scholarship for her artistic abilities.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor Ms. Trumpeter and her achievements here today, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO NEW CITIZENS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and sincerity that I take this time to congratulate the individuals who will take their oath of citizenship on July 4, 2006. In true patriotic fashion, on the day of our great Nation's celebration of independence, a naturalization ceremony will take place, welcoming new citizens of the United States of America. This memorable occasion, coordinated by the Hammond Public Library and