

Congratulations to these latest inductees into the University of Arizona Hall of Fame.

As a UA alumnus, I am proud of my alma mater on many levels and I am thrilled to say, well done, Cats, for this incredible season. Continue to "Bear Down Arizona!"

HONORING MS. STEPHANIE
STUCKEY BENFIELD

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Representative Stephanie Stuckey Benfield upon her retirement from the Georgia General Assembly and to thank her for her fourteen years of service.

For years, Stephanie has valiantly fought for women's rights, the environment, and families. She has been a leader in the Democratic Party, an advocate for all Georgians, and a dear friend.

Born in Eastman, Georgia, Stephanie has always been an outdoors enthusiast. Her love for nature has translated into an active dedication to improving the environment and a commitment to clean water and air that grew stronger when her son was diagnosed with asthma.

Stephanie obtained both her undergraduate and law degree from the University of Georgia. While in office, she received several prestigious awards, including the Environmental Leadership Award by the Georgia Conservation Voters and the Georgia Urban Forest Council Award for Promoting Arbor Day in public schools. It goes without question that her most notable accomplishment, however, has been her impeccable and unwavering service and support to Georgians.

We all know how much Stephanie adores her husband, Robert H. Benfield, Jr., her son, Robert, and her daughter, Beverly. Although we will miss Stephanie's enthusiasm and infinite knowledge in the General Assembly, I applaud her for continuing to be a proponent of the environment. Upon the end of her term, she will be the full-time leader of GreenLaw, where she will maintain her pledge to prevent air and water pollution that endangers human health and degrades Georgia's natural resources.

Representative Benfield, we will miss you terribly; you leave enormous shoes to fill. Thank you for your 14 years of service and for always putting the people of Georgia first.

RESPA HOME WARRANTY
CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2012

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2446, the RESPA Home Warranty Clarification Act.

This bill clarifies that the sale of home warranties cannot be considered a settlement service, and therefore cannot be governed under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, or RESPA.

Many individuals buying a home want to avoid the financial risk of having to pay for major repairs on major systems and appliances.

To reduce that risk and to get the peace of mind that comes with knowing they can help guard against the cost of significant repairs, home buyers often purchase a home warranty.

Many individuals selling a home find that providing a home warranty at their own cost can help facilitate a quicker sale at a higher price by reducing the risk of the unknown for potential buyers.

It is important to note that the purchase of the product is completely optional, and is not made mandatory by any financial institution or government sponsored enterprise during the home-buying process.

Recently, however, HUD erroneously issued an interpretive rule blocking real estate agents from receiving a modest fee when they recommend the product to their client upon the purchase of their new home.

As such, if this rule is allowed to stand, realtors would have no incentive to inform their clients about this product.

Consequently, first-time homebuyers, or low- and moderate income-families may not be made aware of this option, instead being forced to pay full price for the replacement of their home's most expensive appliances.

At a time when our economy is still struggling, we need to ensure that hard working American families are still allowed to gain access to financial products that they depend on.

That is why I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2446.

CONGRESS MUST CALL FOR A NATIONAL MONTH OF VOTER REGISTRATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, recent events have highlighted ongoing efforts to suppress the voting rights of American citizens. State representatives and political leaders in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Florida have made public admissions that their particular state laws were designed to put a dent in the democratic process.

In order to confront this assault on the right to vote, we are introducing a resolution, expressing the sense of Congress that the month of September be dedicated to ensuring that every eligible citizen is registered to vote in the United States, calling for a National Month of Voter Registration.

This resolution will call for a nation-wide focus to challenge voting age citizens around the country to register to vote and confirm the status of their voter registration.

The National Month of Voter Registration will encourage citizens to take action and mobilize voter education efforts and voter registration efforts across the country. Since the 2010 elections, misguided efforts in many states have led to the enactment of laws that could turn the clock back to pre-2008 levels of voter registration and voter turn-out. With no response, thousands of Americans may be subjected to state actions that are not in compliance with our federal voting standards and that harm the franchise.

This national focus will challenge civil rights groups, third party voter registration groups, and voting eligible citizens to take action to conduct the following:

Register to vote. With voter registration deadlines approaching, many citizens may face significant barriers if they wait until the final hours to register to vote.

Verify voting status. Every voting eligible citizen will be encouraged to verify their voting status by confirming their presence on the voter rolls, and confirming that their address and personal identifying information in hand matches what the state or local board of elections has on file. Many voters believe that their voting status and information is current, however, citizens in Tennessee and Florida have already found that voter purging is real and can impact the right to vote without a voter being aware.

Confirm polling place. Every voting eligible citizen will be encouraged to verify voting location before Election Day. Voters may find that their polling location has changed from prior elections.

Mr. Speaker, I have not seen such an assault on the right to vote since the civil rights movement. As I look back on where we have come from in this country, it seems to me that some of these state voting changes mirror the negative trends of Jim Crow in their effect to scale back voting rights.

For instance, last week, the Brennan Center released another report showing how new voter ID laws could impose serious financial burdens on eligible voters. If the right to vote is available to every American citizen, then why are states making it harder to exercise that right?

In addition, a second Judge in Wisconsin has deemed Wisconsin's strict voter ID law unconstitutional under the state's constitution. Litigants in the law suit found that the law created unnecessary hardships for minority voters who are less likely to possess a valid ID. On the other side of the argument, the state of Wisconsin argued that the law was going to help prevent voter fraud.

Some state lawmakers have raised the issue of voter fraud to justify strict voter ID requirements and other strict voting changes. However, they won't tell you that during the George W. Bush Administration's five year probe of voter fraud from 2002-2007, that Administration came up with scant evidence of widespread voter fraud.

In addition, they won't tell you the amount of voter fraud cases that have come out of states that have strict voter ID, because there are none. There were no cases of fraud in state of Indiana when the Supreme Court ruled on Indiana's voter ID law in Crawford v. Marion, and states like Pennsylvania, Florida, and Texas have publicly stated that there are no current cases of voter fraud being pursued in their states. Mr. Speaker, our voting rights are being threatened by the non-existent issue of voter fraud.

Therefore, if states are going to present their worst laws to impact the franchise, then the American people have to rise up and combat these laws with better practices.

During the National Month of Voter Registration, we encourage every American citizen to take back their right to vote. We will work with citizens to ensure that they register to vote, confirm their voting information is correct on the voting rolls, and verify that they know where to go to vote on Election Day.