

In her dissent in 2013, the Shelby County case, Justice Ginsberg highlighted the legislature's heightened responsibility where the protection of citizens' access to polls is a concern, writing that when it is confronting "the most constitutionally invidious form of discrimination, and the most fundamental right in our democratic system, Congress's power to act is at its height."

Well, over the past 50 years Congress has indeed acted. We have worked on a bipartisan basis to ensure that our citizens do not face discrimination at the polls.

In 1965, in response to a slew of violent attacks against civil rights activists, culminating in the attack on peaceful marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, we passed the Voting Rights Act, a bill that aimed to "remedy 95 years of pervasive discrimination in voting rights, which [had] resulted in the almost complete disenfranchisement of minorities in certain areas of the country." That act has been rightfully cited as a "crown jewel" of America's civil rights laws, and for the past 50 years it has expanded minority participation in elections by removing first-generation barriers to ballot access, such as literacy tests and poll taxes. Moreover, the law also helped to tackle so-called second-generation barriers to voting, such as voter ID requirements, elimination or curtailment of early voting, voter registration restrictions, and residency restrictions.

Since the act was passed in 1965, Congress has again and again reaffirmed its commitment to equality in Federal elections by reauthorizing the law in 1970, 1975, 1982, and most recently in 2006 when we voted to extend it for another 25 years. That 2006 vote was not a close one. The bill enjoyed what the press described as "overwhelming bipartisan backing," passing the House by a vote of 390 to 33 and by a Senate vote of 98 to 0. That is pretty persuasive bipartisan backing for taking on the most invidious form of discrimination—discrimination in the right to vote. That vote represented a strong affirmation that equality is not a partisan issue. We can and we have worked together to ensure that all Americans are able to participate in our democracy by exercising their right to vote.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the Voting Rights Act 2 years ago in 2013. So now it is once again Congress's duty—our duty—to work together to reform the Voting Rights Act. To anyone who doubts the continued need for a robust Voting Rights Act, I submit the following:

In 2006, while sections 4 and 5 were still in effect, the House Judiciary Committee found that the Voting Rights Act was still a critical tool for countering discrimination. The committee observed that "discrimination today is more subtle than the visible methods used in 1965. However, the ef-

fect and results are the same, namely a diminishing of the minority community's ability to fully participate in the electoral process and to elect their preferred candidates of choice."

That report further found that "despite the substantial progress that has been made" since the Voting Rights Act was first passed in 1965, "the evidence [of discrimination] before the Committee resemble[d] the evidence before Congress in 1965, and the evidence that was present again in 1970, 1975, 1982 and 1992."

The behavior of various States in the aftermath of the 2013 Shelby County ruling highlighted the critical role that sections 4 and 5 played in protecting minority voters. For example, as the Brennan Center for Justice noted on the same day the Supreme Court issued its decision, Texas officials announced it would implement a draconian photo ID law which had been blocked by section 5 because of its racial impact. Initial estimates suggested that it would impact 600,000 to 800,000 registered voters in Texas who did not have a government-issued photo ID.

Texas was not alone. North Carolina quickly enacted a series of laws that drastically restricted voters' access to the polls by imposing a strict photo ID requirement, significantly reducing early voting and limiting the timeframe for voter registration—so three different measures.

It is particularly telling that North Carolina legislators deliberately waited for the Supreme Court to strike down the preclearance requirements of section 5 to propose the legislation, understanding that laws with such a discriminatory effect would likely not pass muster under the Voting Rights Act.

In North Carolina, more than 300,000 registered voters lacked a DMV-issued ID. Of those, one-third were African American.

In 2008, the vast majority of African Americans—70 percent—who voted in North Carolina voted during the early voting period. So North Carolina's significant reduction in early voting was cynically calculated to reduce the turnout of African Americans at the polls.

These States are not alone. The Brennan Center for Justice found that in the aftermath of the Shelby County case, "at least 10 of the 15 states that had been covered in whole or in part by section 5 introduced new restrictive legislation that would make it harder for minority voters to cast a ballot."

Simply put, these States' behavior shows that access to our fundamental right—the right of every citizen to be heard through elections—is suffering in the wake of the Shelby County decision.

We cannot let our civil rights laws return to once again being, as Dr. King said before the passage of the Voting Rights Act, mere "dignity without strength." We owe it to those who sacrificed before us, who sacrificed to

form a more perfect Union, to work together on a bipartisan basis to restore the Voting Rights Act.

I stand ready to work with any of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this esteemed body to make that happen. I hope every Senator feels the same and understands that access to the polls—the right to vote—is the throbbing heart of a democracy, and without that the democracy is deeply damaged.

Fifty years ago this month, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said at the foot of the Montgomery capitol: "The battle is in our hands." Today, in Congress, in the U.S. Senate, the battle is in our hands. It is our responsibility to debate and pass such legislation to protect and defend the right to vote for every American.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING BILLY CASPER

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a hall of fame golfer, a remarkable husband, and a loyal friend—Billy Casper. Last month, Billy passed away peacefully at the age of 83. I know I speak for all who knew him when I say he will be sorely missed.

Billy Casper was a champion both in golf and in life. Between 1956 and 1975, he won 51 tournaments on the PGA tour, including the U.S. Open in 1959 and again in 1966. In 1970, he defeated Gene Littler to capture the Masters in what was the tournament's last 18-hole playoff. During his long and illustrious career, he claimed many titles, including five Vardon Trophies for the low-scoring average that year. He was also a member of eight U.S. Ryder Cup teams and still holds the record for the most Ryder Cup points earned by a U.S. team member. He was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1978.

Later in his career, Billy captured nine senior PGA tour wins between 1982 and 1989. I am proud that one of these victories came in Jeremy Ranch, UT—the State Billy adopted as his home.

Billy first came to Utah in 1959 to play in the Utah Open. During that week, he and his wife Shirley fell in love with Utah and eventually relocated permanently. He was an active member of the Utah golfing community and was inducted into the Utah Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

Since his passing, several professional golfers have offered tributes in honor of Billy's memory. Jack Nicklaus, widely considered the greatest golfer of all time, said the following about Billy:

Billy Casper was one of the greatest family men—be it inside the game of golf or out—I have had the fortunate blessing to meet. He had such a wonderful balance to his life. Golf was never the most important thing in Billy's life—family was. There was always much more to Billy Casper than golf . . . It was not even a year ago, someone asked Billy how he wanted to be remembered, and he said, "I want to be remembered for how I loved my fellow man."

Mike Reid, a fellow PGA Tour competitor and Utahn, said the following about Billy: "He taught by example, that while we strive for excellence in golf, success should never come at the cost of the relationships we hold dear."

To Billy and his wife Shirley, family was always the first priority. They are the proud parents of 11 children, 6 of whom are adopted, and they now have over 70 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. When his sons were old enough Billy would have them caddie for him on tour so that he could spend that special time with them. He gave freely of himself and spent countless hours in the service of others, both in golf and in church callings.

Billy Casper was one of the very best in his chosen profession, but at the same time, he never let the trappings of the world overshadow what was most important to him—his friends, his faith, and his family. I am profoundly grateful that Elaine and I were able to call Billy and Shirley friends. I will miss Billy Casper dearly, as will all who knew him. May his memory remind us all of the importance of kindness, charity, love, and optimism.

RECOGNIZING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today, with my colleague Senator CANTWELL, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, PNNL, a true example of scientific excellence located in our home State of Washington. For the past 50 years, PNNL has served as the Department of Energy's premier chemistry, environmental sciences, and data analytics national laboratory and has tackled some of our Nation's most complex and urgent challenges.

In 1965, Battelle won a contract to operate a research and development lab at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State. Then known as Pacific Northwest Laboratory, its scientists provided critical support to plutonium production and nuclear waste cleanup at Hanford. Through its commitment to excellence and innovation, the lab grew and evolved to serve the ever-changing needs of our Nation. In 1969, the Pacific Northwest Laboratory's scientific prowess caught the eye of NASA, which chose the lab to analyze lunar soil samples that were collected after landing a man on the Moon. The lab changed its name to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in 1995, and in 1997 opened the Environ-

mental Molecular Sciences Laboratory. This state-of-the-art national scientific user facility provides researchers from around the Nation and the world with experimental instruments, a high-performance supercomputer, and specialized staff allowing them to advance energy and environmental discoveries.

Today, the lab employs 4,300 people at its main Richland campus, the marine research facility in Sequim, and in satellite offices in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, and Washington, DC, and conducts \$1 billion in research annually for the Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, National Institutes of Health, and many more. While it is clear PNNL serves as a cornerstone of the Tri-Cities economy, the dedicated staff are also key leaders in the community. The lab has made it a priority to invest in STEM education, playing an important role as a founding partner in one of Washington State's first STEM high schools. Delta High School is now educating our next generation of scientists and engineers. In higher education, PNNL supported efforts to create a Washington State University branch campus in the region which led to WSU Tri-Cities opening its doors in 1989. I am consistently impressed with PNNL's contributions to the local community.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I join my colleague, Senator MURRAY, in commemorating the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's 50th anniversary. As our constituents in Washington State know, PNNL is an integral part of our economy. The lab has a total economic output of \$1.3 billion and supports more than 6,800 jobs in Washington. PNNL's commitment to commercialization and technology transfer has brought research out of the laboratory and into the real world, further bolstering PNNL's reputation as a national scientific leader and supporting Washington State's economy.

I am reminded each day how the work at PNNL impacts our daily lives. During my visits to the Port of Seattle, I know that PNNL has deployed radiation detection systems that keep our ports safe. And when I watch a movie at home, I know that the DVD I use is possible because of PNNL's advancements in digital data storage technology. Because of these and other important contributions, PNNL has earned more Federal Laboratory Consortium Awards than any other national laboratory, holds more than 2,300 U.S. and foreign patents, and fostered the creation of 108 spin-off companies that remain open today.

PNNL plays a unique role in addressing our Nation's energy demands by furthering research in climate change, advanced biofuels, and the electric grid. In the 1990s, the lab helped create the Global Change Assessment Model to help institutions across the world explore the impacts of climate change and the different policy proposals to address it. The scientists at PNNL have also developed a cutting-edge

chemical process that transforms algae to crude oil in minutes, a technology that could help our Nation reduce its dependence on foreign oil. And the lab continues to lead in assessing cyber security threats by developing and testing technology to help protect the electric grid. With its stellar record of commercializing research, I have no doubt that PNNL's work will continue to meet the United States' energy challenges in the future.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, together Senator CANTWELL and I have been proud supporters and advocates for PNNL here in the other Washington, working to make sure our colleagues and the administration understand the important research it conducts, and the significant contributions it makes to the Tri-Cities community. Over the past 50 years, PNNL has benefited from a talented and committed staff of scientists, engineers, and nontechnical staff, a dedicated and committed operator in Battelle, and a strong partner in the Department of Energy. Congratulations to PNNL. I know Senator CANTWELL and I look forward to PNNL's future contributions to Washington State, the Nation, and the world.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to express support for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week, and to express the need for greater Federal investment in medical research.

I regret that severe weather prevented me from doing this last week, which was Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week is a time for Americans everywhere to help others learn more about multiple sclerosis, and to do what they can to make a difference for those who suffer from this disease.

Multiple sclerosis can be devastating for the individuals who suffer from it, as well as their families. Each year, I am proud to work with Senator COLLINS to recognize multiple sclerosis patients, their caregivers and their families by introducing a resolution in support of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. Senator COLLINS and I worked together again on a resolution for 2015. I am pleased to say that this resolution, S. Res. 98, cleared the Senate on March 4. It is a testament to the support of the Senate for the 400,000 Americans who are estimated to be suffering from this terrible disease.

While it is important to recognize the toll taken by multiple sclerosis, it is just as important to note that it is but one of many debilitating or deadly diseases for which we lack a cure, or for which existing treatments are inadequate. For many of these diseases, we have made great progress due to federally funded biomedical research. Unfortunately, when medical inflation is taken into account, the National Institute of Health's, NIH, budget has been