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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES.

Expressing support for designation of the month of September as “National Voting Rights Month”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. VEASEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for designation of the month of September as “National Voting Rights Month”.

Whereas voting is one of the single most important rights that can be exercised in our democracy;

Whereas over the course of history, various voter suppression laws in the United States have hindered, and even prohibited, certain individuals and groups from exercising this right;

Whereas during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Native Americans and Americans who were born abroad, spoke a language other than English, or were formerly subjected to slavery, were denied full citizenship and prevented from voting by English literacy tests;

Whereas from 1954 to 1968, minority groups such as African Americans in the South suffered from the oppressive effects of Jim Crow laws designed to prevent political, economic, and social mobility;

Whereas African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other underrepresented voters were subject to violence, poll taxes, literacy tests, all White primaries, property ownership tests, grandfather clauses, voter roll purges, and the prevention of former prisoners from voting;

Whereas in 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to protect the rights of African Americans and other traditionally disenfranchised groups to vote;

Whereas in 2013, the Supreme Court invalidated section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, dismantling the preclearance provision in the law that protected voters in States that historically have suppressed the rights of minorities to vote;

Whereas since the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have been vacated, many States gerrymandered districts have gone unchallenged or have become less likely to be invalidated by the courts;

Whereas these gerrymandered districts have been found to have a discriminatory impact on traditionally disenfranchised minorities through tactics that include “cracking”, diluting their voting power across many districts, and “packing”, concentrating minority voters’ power in one district to reduce their voting power in other districts;

Whereas the courts have found the congressional and, in some cases, State legislative district maps in Texas,

North Carolina, Florida, and Wisconsin to be gerrymandered districts that were created with the intent of interfering with the constitutional right to vote;

Whereas the *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision calls on Congress to fix the formula in the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas in 33 States, some form of restrictive voting law has been instituted since 2013;

Whereas these restrictive voting laws encompass cutbacks in early voting, voter roll purges, placement of faulty equipment in minority communities, requirement of photo identification—the procurement of which amounts to a modern day poll tax, and elimination of same-day registration;

Whereas more than 80 million minority, elderly, poor, and disabled voters could be disenfranchised by these changes in voting;

Whereas in 2016, discriminatory laws in North Carolina, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Texas have been ruled unconstitutional and overturned by the courts;

Whereas there are local elected officials who refuse to adhere to Federal court decisions that have struck down suppressive voting laws instituted since the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* case;

Whereas there is much more work to be done to ensure all Americans have the right to vote;

Whereas National Voter Registration Day is September 25;
and

Whereas the month of September would be an appropriate month to designate as “National Voting Rights Month”:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Voting
3 Rights Month”;

4 (2) encourages all people in the United States
5 to uphold the right of every American to exercise
6 their sacred and fundamental right to vote; and

7 (3) endorses the following solutions to further
8 the mission of allowing all citizens to vote:

9 (A) Our Nation’s public schools and uni-
10 versities should develop an academic curriculum
11 under which students would learn about the im-
12 portance of voting, how to become registered to
13 vote, where to vote, and the different forms of
14 voting. This curriculum would include teaching
15 the history of voter suppression in America be-
16 fore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed.
17 It would also teach students about current
18 issues that are related to laws that have been
19 passed to restrict the vote since 1965 or any ac-
20 tions taken by State and Federal Government
21 officials since passage of the Voting Rights Act
22 of 1965 that have created barriers to being able
23 to vote.

1 (B) The Postal Service should issue a spe-
2 cial Fannie Lou Hamer stamp during the
3 month of September, to remind Americans
4 about how ordinary citizens risked their lives,
5 marched, and participated in our great democ-
6 racy so all Americans would have the funda-
7 mental right to vote.

8 (C) Congress should allocate the requisite
9 funds needed for public service announcements
10 on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, so-
11 cial media, billboards, buses, and other forms of
12 media to remind Americans when elections are
13 being held, and to urge people to get out and
14 vote.

15 (D) Congress should pass legislation that
16 will allow all citizens upon reaching the age of
17 18 to be automatically registered to vote in
18 Federal elections.