There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican conference, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 20) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 20

Resolved, That the following Member be, and he is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Appropriations: MR. GOODE.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to clause 2(b) of Public Law 98–183, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following member to the Commission on Civil Rights on the part of the House to fill the existing vacancy thereon:

Dr. Abigail N. Thernstrom, Lexington, Massachusetts.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

EXPLANATION OF PROCEEDINGS OCCURRING DURING JOINT SESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House for 5 minutes to speak about what took place here in joint session today and to talk about what has led us to this point.

Today, here in this Chamber, we had a joint session to count the electoral votes; and, of course, there were some of us, mostly represented by Members from the Congressional Black Caucus, who chose to come to the floor in an attempt to object to the acceptance of the electoral votes from Florida. We did that, despite the fact we understood the rules. We knew that in order to object, we had to have in writing the objection, signed by both a House Member and a Member of the Senate.

We did not have one Member of the Senate who had signed any objection, but we came to the floor of this House and we said to the Vice President, who presided over the joint session, each time that we objected we said that, no, we did not have a signature from a United States Senator, that we only had our signature, we had the signatures of some of our colleagues, and we had the support of our constituents.

It was important for us to do this. It was important because we have just experienced one of the most traumatizing and devastating elections, particularly as it played out in Florida, that this country has ever been involved with.

□ 1345

I would like to cite to you some of what happened in Florida that has caused us so much concern. I am going to quote from an article that was done by Laura Flanders. I will not be quoting all of the article, but I will be submitting the rest of this for inclusion in the RECORD.

On day one after the election, there was a story in the Florida papers about an unauthorized police roadblock, stopping cars not a mile from a black church-turned-polling-booth. NAACP volunteers reported being swamped with complaints from registered voters who found it impossible to vote. They heard stories of intimidation at and around polling places; demands for superfluous ID; people complained about a pattern of singling out black men and youth for criminal background checks, and in call after call, would-be voters complained they had been denied language interpretation and other help at the polls.

By now it is clear that overwhelmed election workers made a mass of mistakes, but those mistakes were laced through with some clear intent to suppress some votes.

A full 3 weeks after the election, The New York Times finally took a serious look and reported that, anticipating a large turnout in a tight race, Florida election officials had given laptop computers to precinct workers so they would have direct access to the State's voter rolls, but the computers only went to some precincts and only one went to a precinct whose people were predominantly black. The technology gap in the no-laptop precincts forced the workers there to rely on a few phone lines to the head office. Voters whose names did not appear on the rolls were held up, while workers tried to get through on the phone, for hours, or until they gave up.

For those who voted, there was another technology glitch. Mr. Speaker, 185,000 Floridians cast votes that did not count. Theirs were the ballots that had been punched too few or too many times, or were otherwise flawed. Flaws too, seem to have followed race lines. In an election that turned on a few hundred votes, Floridians whose ballots failed to register a mark for President were much more likely to have voted with computer punch cards than optical scanning machines. In Miami Dade, the county with the most votes cast, predominantly black precincts saw their votes thrown out at 4 times the rate of white precincts. According to the Times, one out of 11 ballots in predominantly black precincts were rejected, a total of 9,904.

Urban, multi-racial Palm Beach, home of the infamous butterfly ballot and Duval, where candidates' names were spread across 2 pages despite what the published ballot had shown, produced 31 percent of Florida's discarded ballots, but only 12 percent of the total votes cast in Duval, which has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the Nation, more than 26,000 votes were rejected, 9,000 from precincts that were predominantly black.

Many Floridians who found themselves ''scrubbed'' off the voting rolls were not purged accidentally, reports Gregory Palast for Salon.com. Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris paid a private firm, ChoicePoint, $4 million to cleanse the voting rolls, and the firm used the State's felon-ban to exclude 8,000 voters who had never committed a felony. ChoicePoint is a Republican outfit. Board members include former New York Police Commissioner Howard Safir, and billionaire Ken Langone, chair of the fundraising committee for Mayor Giuliani's aborted New York Senate bid.

I cannot complete all of what I would like to share, but I will be submitting this for the RECORD. Let the record show that we were here today, that we participated and we voiced our objection, and the fight will continue for justice and equality. People were disenfranchised, and that must be stopped and corrected.

The erroneous data wasn't their doing, ChoicePoint complains, the names came, raw, from the state of Texas. They were supposed to be reviewed locally, but they were distributed un-reviewed. African Americans dominate. (The 8,000 wrong names were ''a minor glitch'' ChoicePoint told Palast; a glitch fifteen times the size of the Texas Governor's lead.)

As for that election morning police checkpoint, near Tallahassee, Robert Chamber, a Black resident, told the Guardian UK he knew what it was about: ''putting fear in people's hearts. . . . '' The Florida panhandle is home to the largest concentration of neo-confederate white supremacist groups in the US. But this problem is no neo-nazi plot—it's racism of the institutional, not the exceptional kind, and even more devastating than the statistics has been Democratic leadership's silence. While African Americans in huge numbers know there was massive voter fraud, harassment and intimidation a la Jim Crow, the Democratic Party's white top-dogs have resolutely refused to talk about voting rights, race or racism—Why? For fear it will hurt them in the court of public opinion? Among white swing voters and southern Democrats? Already hurting in all of those places, they're trifling with one of the few solid voting blocks they've got left, (Blacks, Latinos, Jews.)

The NAACP came out strong, the weekend after the election, holding public hearings and gathering 300 pages of legally sworn testimony from 486 people who say they were denied their right to vote. With the Congressional Black Caucus the NAACP wrote to Janet Reno seeking a Justice Department investigation into possible violations of the Voting Rights Act. That was back on November 14th. Since then, the Gore campaign has filed dozens of lawsuits—not one deals with violations of voting rights. The Justice Department has initiated what officials go out of their way to characterize as a preliminary inquiry, not an investigation. (Alligator-wrestler Reno is scared to stir the waters in her home-state, where she's hoping to retire any day now, some say.)

The Gore team has chosen to try to eke some votes out of three counties with manual counts, and to make much of butterflies and chards, but nothing of race. (Recently, Gore told a reporter he was ''very troubled'' by the ''serious allegations.'' That's it.) His racist denial of the seriousness of racism makes nonsense out of US politics.

The Electoral College is a tool of racism. As Yale's Akhil Reed Amar wrote in the New York Times, ''the College was designed at