

and inability to control Palestinian and Lebanese militants who have begrudged her Western culture and delicate ethnic and religious balance.

How frustrating that despite Israel's sacrificial Gaza disengagement a year ago as well as the departure from southern Lebanon in 2000, with plans for the further withdrawal from the West Bank to create a Palestinian state, its adversaries refuse to respond in kind. Reestablishing a deteriorated deterrence posture is a must for Israel's security. Recently elected Israeli Premier Ehud Olmert is undergoing his first major test by fire, literally, filling in the big shoes of his incapacitated predecessor Ariel Sharon. Sharon, the daring leader in war and peace, would approve Olmert's conduct that is supported by a united political front, so otherwise rare, testimony to Israel's resolve to again prevail. A determined Jewish state has no plans to leave its bad neighborhood, and it may yet help transforming it with its essential American partner. May children on both sides of Israel's borders soon be able to freely play and sleep at peace.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation of Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, grew up in Haifa, Israel.

HONORING THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 71 FOR 86 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today so that I may honor the American Legion Post 71 of Denton, Texas as they celebrate their 86th Anniversary. For close to a century, the American Legion Post and its members have selflessly served thousands of veterans and their families throughout North Texas.

The American Legion, holding a 3 million part membership nationally, was chartered by Congress in the aftermath of World War I as a "patriotic, mutual-help, war-time veterans' organization." Since its establishment, the American Legion has sworn "to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;" to promote service and to harvest a healthy sense of community. Today there are over 15,000 posts world-wide.

In celebration of their 86th Anniversary, Post 71 will honor the family of Ernest Dallas Jr., a Denton Veteran of the Iraq War, with a "Fallen Heroes Memorial Plaque."

Mr. Speaker, I applaud American Legion Post 71 for their honorable service to our nation and our heroes. I also recognize one of those heroes, Ernest Dallas Jr., who lost his life in Iraq not more than a year ago. Our nation truly owes a debt of gratitude to him and our other fallen soldiers for their admirable and unyielding service to our nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, on July 13, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 374.

Rollcall vote No. 374 was on final passage of H.R. 9, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act. Had I been present, I would have voted, "yea."

This is an important piece of legislation that I hope to see pass through the Senate, signed by the President and enacted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on July 20, 2006 and missed Rollcall vote 393. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" for 393.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 921, condemning the provocations by terrorist organizations on Israel's northern and southern borders.

The actions of the terrorist organizations, Hezbollah, in Lebanon, and Hamas, in Gaza, against Israel are unconscionable. Instead of working towards peace, these terrorist organizations have chosen to perpetuate the violence. Unprovoked attacks on Israel's borders, murdering Israeli soldiers, taking Israeli hostages and showering rockets targeting and killing Israeli civilians are not furthering any legitimate goal.

I am pleased to see that many of the world's leaders have publicly recognized that the crisis in the Middle East was deliberately incited by terrorist organizations. I applaud the leaders of the world's top industrial nations' collaborative statement on July 16 condemning the terrorists: "These extremist elements and those that support them cannot be allowed to plunge the Middle East into chaos and provoke a wider conflict. The extremists must immediately halt their attacks."

I also congratulate the Arab nations, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan for their willingness to openly criticize Hezbollah's attacks on Israel's northern border. I am in full support of their efforts to speak out against Hezbollah's recent assaults against Israel.

Israel's actions over the past week must be viewed in a broader context. It should be recognized that in response to Israel's unilateral

withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005, as well as its committed plan to pull out completely from the West Bank, Israel has met only violence. Since 2000, Hezbollah has fired hundreds of rockets at civilian areas and kidnapped and murdered Israeli soldiers. Since September 2005, terrorist groups in Gaza have launched over 1,000 rocket attacks at Israeli cities. Previously, Israel exhibited restraint and refused to respond to these aggressions with any significant counterattack. Now, in light of the current unprovoked kidnappings by Hamas and Hezbollah, Israel is warranted to act appropriately to free the captured soldiers and to defend her citizens.

Now is the time for the Lebanese Government to abide by the U.N.'s rules. In refusing to disarm Hezbollah as required by U.N. Resolution 1559, the Lebanese Government is choosing to openly ignore the decree of the international community. Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora should accept responsibility and take immediate action against the terrorist group which Lebanon harbors. I support the resolutions that call on the United Nations to help the Prime Minister and his government to achieve these goals.

Now is also the time for the Hamas government to accept accountability for the actions of its terrorist organization. As the elected government of the Palestinian people, they have a duty to tell the terrorists to release the soldier they captured, halt the relentless rocket fire aimed at Israeli civilians and end their encouragement of terrorist acts against Israel.

But neither the Palestinian nor the Lebanese Government are wholly responsible for these recent provocations against Israel. There is a much greater strategic dimension to the Hamas-Hezbollah offensive. The terrorist organizations, Hezbollah and Hamas, are unquestionably sponsored and guided by the Iranian and Syrian Governments.

Iranian and Syrian support of these attacks will not be rewarded. The current bloodshed of innocent Israeli and Lebanese civilians will not strengthen their governments' positions. As sponsors of terror they will be condemned and held accountable for their actions.

Israel must have the right to defend her civilians from ongoing missile attacks, whether they arise from Lebanon or the Gaza Strip. Like the United States and other sovereign nations, Israel is justified in reestablishing its deterrent posture.

FANNIE LOU HAMER, ROSA PARKS, AND CORETTA SCOTT KING VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965:

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act (H.R. 9). I am a proud co-

sponsor of this bipartisan legislation, which ensures every American citizen has the right to vote.

If the Constitution is the embodiment of America's ideal of equality, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a historic milestone in our pursuit of that ideal. The namesakes of this legislation are among the tens of thousands of common heroes who fought, sacrificed and even perished to abolish the institutional barriers to voting that cast a shadow on American freedom for nearly 200 years. It is the responsibility of our generation to honor their legacy of vision and commitment through our diligent stewardship of their hard-won victories. Today, as America's elected representatives, we in Congress must renew our dedication to advance the cause of freedom by reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act.

Enacted in 1965 and renewed in 1982, the Voting Rights Act (VRA) prohibits the use of any voting practice or procedure that discriminates based on race and requires certain jurisdictions to provide language assistance to minority citizens. The Act bars literacy tests, poll taxes, intimidation, threats, violence and other transparent assaults on liberty. It also protects against insidious procedural barriers such as restrictive voter registration requirements, districting plans that dilute minority voting strength, discriminatory annexations and the siting of polling places at inaccessible locations.

The Department of Justice has called the Voting Rights Act "the most successful piece of civil rights legislation ever adopted." As a result of the Act in Mississippi, African American registration went from less than 10 percent in 1964 to almost 60 percent in 1968. In Alabama, registration rose from 24 percent to 57 percent. These immediate gains in access to the polls sowed seeds of equal representation that future generations would reap.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there were approximately 300 African Americans serving in public office across the country in 1964, including only three in Congress. Today, more than 9,100 African Americans hold elected office at the local and state level, including 43 in Congress. The guarantees of full political participation codified in the VRA have greatly benefited all minority groups including Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans—the last group to win the right to vote. This impressive record of progress argues strongly for reauthorization of the Act.

While most provisions of the VRA are permanent, several key provisions of the law are set to expire in 2007. These provisions include Section 5, which requires covered jurisdictions to obtain approval or "pre-clearance" from the U.S. Department of Justice before they can change voting practices or procedures. Section 203 of the Act requires election officials to provide written and oral assistance to certain citizens with limited English proficiency. Also due for reauthorization are Sections 6–9, which empower the U.S. Attorney General to appoint examiners and send Federal observers to monitor elections when evidence exists of voter intimidation at the polls.

This bipartisan reauthorization bill restores the original intent of the VRA by making it clear that any voting rule changes motivated by intentional and purposeful discrimination cannot be "precleared" by a Federal court or the Department of Justice. And H.R. 9 mod-

ernizes the VRA by requiring the use of the most updated census data and by directing the GAO to determine ways to better administer election assistance to non-English speakers.

Despite broad bipartisan support within the Congress for reauthorization, some Members question whether the VRA's protections are still necessary in today's America. Regrettably, almost 40 years after enactment of the VRA, voting discrimination is not only a painful memory of our past but also a persistent challenge for the present and future. Since the VRA was last reauthorized in 1982, the Department of Justice and disfranchised voters have brought hundreds of intentional voter discrimination cases before the courts, many within the last 5 years.

In 2001, the mayor and all-white Board of Aldermen of Kilmichael, Mississippi canceled local elections when it appeared several African-American candidates might win seats. Elections were finally held in 2003, after the Department of Justice used the VRA to intervene. In the election that followed, the town elected three African-American board members and their first African-American mayor.

South Dakota enacted a redistricting plan in 2001 that "packed," or over-concentrated Native Americans into a district, preventing them from creating a majority voting bloc in an additional, neighboring district. Three years later, a Federal court invalidated the state's plan, finding "substantial evidence" that state officials excluded Native Americans from voting and holding office.

Local officials in Bexar County, Texas attempted to undermine Latino voting strength in a 2003 special election by neglecting to site polling places near those communities. Using the special provisions of the VRA, Latino advocates were able to prevent Latino voters from being silenced in the election by obtaining expedited assistance from the local district court.

And not all voting irregularities are local. The mere mention of "Florida" or "Ohio" evoke the voting controversies of the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections, which called the legitimacy of the outcomes into question and shook Americans' confidence in our elections process. The effort to reestablish confidence in the elections process has produced new controversies over electronic voting machines that leave no paper record for verification and recounts.

Clearly, the voting discrimination and irregularities that inspired the Voting Rights Act persist and serve to remind us that the right to vote cannot be taken for granted, but it must be actively protected and defended. By passing H.R. 9 and reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, Congress reinforces the foundations of American democracy and keeps faith with generations of Americans past and future. I urge my colleagues to reject all attempts to weaken the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act (H.R. 9) and to support the bipartisan compromise before us today.

SUPPORT THE STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT, H.R. 810

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I support moving stem cell research forward and believe H.R. 810 will accomplish it in an ethical and responsible manner.

It is almost 2 years since my daughter-in-law, Naomi, underwent a kidney transplant. I marvel at the combined results of the many people and years of science and research that came before her which gave her that opportunity.

Naomi was lucky and found an eligible donor in her brother. The transplant operation was a success. In fact, just a month ago, our family cheered on Naomi at the Transplant Olympics.

It seems like a happy ending, but the story does not end here.

My daughter-in-law takes a number of drugs to keep her body from rejecting her new kidney. I hope her body will be able to support her transplant for many years.

Hopefully, Naomi will not need to face another transplant for many, many years. Clearly, she may not be able to go to a sibling again.

Will new research bring her new hope in the future?

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I have a personal reason for seeing an expansion of the existing stem cell lines.

New stem cell lines hold the promise of advancing medical research and providing cures to a number of diseases.

After years of work, both the House and Senate passed bipartisan stem cell legislation. Unfortunately, President Bush vetoed this critical bill. Despite a valiant effort in the House, we could not override this veto.

We need to think about tomorrow—what kind of future do we want to provide for the millions of individuals who live with life-threatening illnesses and their families?

If we don't move forward, we will not have the chance to develop innovative treatments, including the potential of growing kidneys.

I hope I can give Naomi and other families like ours that chance.

REGARDING THE GATES FOUNDATION'S WORK TO DEVELOP AN HIV VACCINE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, AIDS is a disease that knows no national borders. Approximately 40 million people across the globe are infected with this virus. There is no cure, and for many people, no hope.

Between 1995 and 2005, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS has doubled, despite efforts to prevent transmission of the disease. New infections among women outpace those among men as a result of gender inequalities and violence toward women. Ninety-