

section is changed, many of our grandchildren will continue to be punished for the sins of our grandfathers. That should not happen in America.

Using election data from 1964—when 60% of Americans today were not even alive—to determine discrimination patterns today is deeply troubling and raises questions as to the fairness and constitutionality of the legislation. The criteria should be updated to the relevant last three presidential elections to assure equal protection under the law.

Finally, I continue to believe that section 203 is bad public policy. In America, English is the language of opportunity. This common language binds us together as a people and strengthens us as a Nation. We must continue to emphasize the importance of learning English to those integrating into American society and culture. This is important to them and critical to the Nation as a whole. Those entering the country illegally clearly are not allowed to vote and naturalized citizens must demonstrate English proficiency before becoming Americans. Thus, contrary to popular notions, there are relatively few Americans not sufficiently proficient with English to cast a ballot. Those that are not already have their voting rights protected by laws permitting them to bring a translator into the voting booth with them. If a city or state wishes to print multiple ballots in numerous languages the Federal Government should not prevent them from doing so. On the other hand, the federal government should not mandate that they do it either. Simply put, taxpayers should not be compelled by federal law to pay for printing ballots in languages other than English.

The amendments that I supported to shorten the bill's extension to 10 years, apply the VRA fairly and nationwide, remove jurisdictions from coverage when they have shown a consistent respect for the voting rights of minority citizens, and end a requirement forcing taxpayers to pay for ballots in languages other than English—would have greatly improved this bill. I hope that appropriate changes are made to strengthen this bill, so that I am able to vote for final passage when it comes back to the House.

There is no doubt that the debate over the Voting Rights Act is an emotional one. For many Americans it has become an icon and rightfully so. The VRA has been a critical weapon in the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunity and should remain so. But the emergency provisions were written in a different time to address a different set of challenges. There is danger in allowing symbolism to overcome reality and principle.

This is not a vote I took lightly. I know too often in America that when the accusation is racism, one may wrongly be considered guilty until proven innocent. I regret the phenomena but will not let it dictate my conscience. Everyday we should not only work to root out racial discrimination but should work to reduce race consciousness as well. As Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts opined in the case *LVLAC v. Perry*: "It is a sordid business, this divvying us up by race." I agree. Instead we should all work together to achieve Martin Luther King, Jr.'s goal of achieving a society that judges our children "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

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

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

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:

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 9, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments. Since its enactment in August of 1965, the Voting Rights Act (VRA) has helped bring us closer to realizing the true spirit of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees all American citizens the quintessential democratic right to vote. Today we'll vote to reauthorize expiring provisions of the VRA and by doing so send a signal that we will not tolerate discrimination at the polls.

Some of our colleagues will rise today to offer amendments that would weaken the VRA. I am opposed to any attempts to dilute the intent and spirit of the VRA by weakening Section 5 of the bill. Section 5 ensures that the Federal Government will take a closer look at election practices in states and localities with a history of discrimination at the polls.

Our Nation has made a great deal of progress since 1965 when the VRA was first signed into law by President Johnson. But some municipalities continue to make it difficult, intentionally or otherwise, for ethnic and racial minority voters to register and vote. The great civil rights leaders of the 1960s, including our distinguished colleague Rep. JOHN LEWIS, worked tirelessly to fight discrimination in all aspects of our society. They knew then, and we know now, that the right of all Americans to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. We must continue their great legacy and pass the bill before us today without amendment.

PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance:

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, on July 19, 2006, I voted against H.R. 2389, the Pledge Protection Act of 2005.

The American flag is a symbol of liberty and justice, of freedom of speech and expression, as well as the other freedoms we cherish which are guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. But even more important than the symbol are the ideals and principles that the symbol rep-

resents. I believe the best way to honor the American flag is not to wrap ourselves in it, but to respect and honor the values for which it stands. That our Nation can tolerate disrespect for our flag is proof of the enduring strength of our Nation. It is proof to me that ours is the greatest nation on earth.

I served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves. I know how deeply our veterans love and revere our flag. I share those feelings for our flag and all that it represents.

Our democracy has withstood many tests over time, and has been strengthened as a result. There is no more important protection provided by the First Amendment than its protection of political speech and expression.

In a letter to Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont dated May 18, 1999, former Secretary of State (then General) Colin L. Powell wrote to express his concerns regarding a constitutional amendment banning flag burning: "The First Amendment exists to insure that freedom of speech and expression applies not just to that with which we agree or disagree, but also that which we find outrageous. I would not amend that great shield of democracy to hammer a few miscreants. The flag will still be flying proudly long after they have slunk away. . . . If I were a member of Congress, I would not vote for the proposed amendment. . . ."

I agree wholeheartedly with Colin Powell's statement, and believe it applies here as well. The Pledge of Allegiance is an invaluable part of our national heritage, but we must also bear in mind the immeasurable significance of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Finally, I have deep concerns about current efforts to deny the Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, the ability to review the constitutionality of our Federal laws. I believe preserving our three-branch system of government is in our Nation's best interest.

CONGRATULATING LAKE COUNTY ELECTRICIANS JATC CLASS OF 2006 GRADUATES

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sincerity and admiration that I offer congratulations to several of Northwest Indiana's most talented, dedicated, and hardworking individuals. On Friday, July 28, 2006, the Lake County Electricians Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee, JATC, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the National Electrical Contractors Association will honor the class of 2006 at their annual Apprentice Completion Banquet, which will be held at the Avalon Manor Banquet Hall in Hobart, Indiana.

This year, the Lake County Electricians JATC will be recognizing and honoring the following graduates, who have completed the apprentice training: Nicholas Bacan, Daniel Boyd, Glen Britton, Nicholas Cardaras, Gonzaliev Castillo, Robert Coleman, James Crocker, David Delaney, Oliver Ewing, Jason M. Gallion, Nathan Gombus, Nathan Gonzales, Eric Hardesty, Jeremy Huber, Mark Jackson, Eric Kociara, Craig B. Konopasek,

Travis Link, Jesus Luna, James Mola, William Parsons, David Petrashevich, Geoffrey Richards, Elliot Rosenberry, John Santana, Jared Solan, Jonathan Steuer, Nicholas Vlasich, and Keith Winston.

Northwest Indiana has a rich history of excellence in its craftsmanship and loyalty by its tradesmen. These outstanding graduates all exemplify these traits. They have mastered their trade and have demonstrated their loyalty to both the union and the community through their commitment, hard work, and selfless sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating these committed, hardworking individuals. Along with the other extraordinary men and women of Northwest Indiana's unions, these individuals have contributed in many ways to the growth and development of the economy in Indiana's First Congressional District, and I am very proud to represent them in Washington, DC.

COMMENDING THE CHILDREN'S
INN AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES
OF HEALTH

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend The Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health, an extraordinary organization in my congressional district, which has worked for many years to provide a warm, supportive home environment for seriously ill children and families seeking cutting-edge treatment at the NIH.

Since it opened in June 1990, The Children's Inn has provided free lodgings to over 6,000 children and their families. The true extent of its services, however, goes far beyond the mere provision of living accommodations. By bringing seriously ill children and their families together in a warm, lively community that provides camaraderie and understanding, The Children's Inn has created invaluable support networks and friendships for children who face daily and often overwhelming challenges.

As we begin National Hospitality House Week, I am pleased to recognize and pay tribute to The Children's Inn and its staff and volunteers for their selfless commitment to some of the youngest and most fragile members of our community. Their generosity of spirit is inspiring and, through their actions, they serve as role models to so many others.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent this special place—The Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health—and to honor it today.

CONDOLENCES TO THE NORTHUP
FAMILY

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kentucky's Third Congressional District, ANNE NORTHUP, along with her

husband, Woody, suffered the tragic loss of her son Joshua on Wednesday, July 12, 2006. By all accounts, Joshua was an outstanding young man who will be truly missed by his family and friends. Joshua was a 1998 graduate of Saint Joseph's College of Rensselaer, Indiana. In 1995, Joshua ventured to Tanzania, Africa with a priest from Saint Joseph's, where he continued his education and volunteered in a leper colony to help those most in need.

Joshua was employed at Humana, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky, where he was clearly a valued employee. Upon hearing the sad news, Humana issued the following statement: "Joshua was an exemplary Humana associate, beloved by his colleagues and held in high esteem by his supervisors. We are deeply saddened by his death and extend our thoughts, prayers and heartfelt sympathy to his family."

Funeral services were held for Joshua at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, July 15, 2006. Joshua is survived by his parents, ANNE and Woody NORTHUP, and five brothers and sisters: David, Katie, Kevin, Mark and Erin.

On behalf of the entire congressional delegation from Kentucky, as well as her colleagues from across the Nation, we offer our most sincere condolences to the entire Northup family.

CONGRATULATING THE ORGANIZERS, PARTICIPANTS, AND PATRONS OF THE 25TH ANNUAL W.C. HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the organizers, participants, and patrons of the 25th Annual W.C. Handy Music Festival, which begins on July 21 and lasts until July 30.

The W.C. Handy Festival is named after Florence, Alabama, native William Christopher Handy. Mr. Handy, who is remembered today as the "Father of Blues," was born in 1873 in a log cabin that his grandfather built. He left Florence in 1892, settling in Memphis, Tennessee, where he penned his most recognized composition, "St. Louis Blues." Before his death in 1958, W.C. Handy wrote over 150 songs and his widespread appeal is credited with popularizing blues music into America's cultural mainstream.

Mr. Speaker, beginning with the birth of Mr. Handy and continuing today, the Shoals Region of Northwest Alabama has a storied musical history. The Shoals area is also the birthplace of the "Father of Rock and Roll" Sam Phillips, who discovered artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Jerry Lee Lewis. The region is also the home of the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, as well as generations of musicians, composers, songwriters, and internationally recognized recording studios and producers. Over the last 50 years, musical legends such as Aretha Franklin, the Rolling Stones, and some of today's musical superstars have recorded many of their biggest hits in the area.

Each year, the Music Preservation Society organizes this unique festival to pay tribute to

W.C. Handy's legacy and the area's rich musical heritage. Thousands of musical patrons are entertained through more than 200 events at locations throughout the Shoals. Musical acts range from a wide variety of blues, jazz, gospel, R&B, soul, and country acts. The artists perform live in local restaurants, nightclubs, theatres, parks, libraries, art galleries, churches, malls, museums, and street corners throughout the region.

The Festival, which began in 1982 featuring jazz legend Dizzy Gillespie, has continued to grow each year. Past headlining acts have included Clarence Carter, the Manhattan Transfer, and Percy Sledge. In its 25-year history, National Geographic, the Southeast Tourism Society, Travelocity.com, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel have recognized the festival as one of the top events in the South.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to congratulate and applaud the efforts of the Music Preservation Society Board of Directors and staff, and the festival's volunteers and musicians who make this celebration of the cultural heritage of northwest Alabama a reality each year.

MARRIAGE PROTECTION
AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to House Joint Resolution 88, which would amend our Constitution to deny basic rights to gays and lesbians. I would like to express my disappointment in the Republican leadership for once again bringing this divisive and discriminatory amendment before Congress.

Our Constitution has guided our Nation for over 200 years. During that time, it has been amended to guarantee religious liberty, equal protection, and the right to vote. Not once has it been amended to take away rights from a specific group of people. Yet that is what this legislation would do.

Of course, this constitutional amendment will not be adopted; it failed to garner even a simple majority only weeks ago in the Senate. We are wasting our time on this because Republican pollsters have concluded that targeting gays and lesbians is a winning election strategy.

Mr. Speaker, our fellow citizens deserve better. Same-sex couples are trying to raise families, pay the bills, get health care for their partners, and put their kids through college. Instead of working to help them, we are debating whether to permanently deny them over 1,000 rights and benefits given to married heterosexual couples. We should be striving for fairness and equality, not singling them out for discrimination.

Americans are sick and tired of political gamesmanship. They want a Congress that will address the real challenges our Nation faces: health care, energy security, education, economic opportunity. The Republican leadership has once again let down the American people, and I urge my colleagues to reject this effort to distract and divide.