

So we should remember that for every James Chaney, there were persons who were in the shadows who made a difference. JOHN LEWIS was one of them. For every Thurgood Marshall, there's a Charles Hamilton Houston who mentored, who made a difference in the life of a Thurgood Marshall such that he could go on to do the great things that he did. For every Rosa Parks, there is a person who is in the shadows, who made a difference, who helped to make the occasion such that Rosa Parks could rise to the occasion by taking a seat and igniting a spark that started the civil rights movement.

Let us remember not only the persons who made the great headlines that we continually recognize, but let's remember that there were other persons who made great headway who don't get the recognition today that they merit, but they were a part of this great movement for liberty and justice for African Americans across the length and breadth of this country.

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At some point, I shall talk about persons who were of many hues who also participated in this great movement, because we didn't get here by ourselves. There were many persons of many colors who marched and protested. Many of them gave their lives to this movement as well—John Shillady comes to mind, who was beaten in Austin, Texas, and as a result of that beating lost his life. He was an NAACP'er, he was Anglo. Of course we know about Goodman and Chaney and Schwerner. And two of them, of course, were not African Americans, Schwerner and Goodman.

So I think that on occasions like this we should always celebrate the great and noble African Americans who made great sacrifices, remember those who were in the shadows, and also remember that there were others of many hues, of many ethnicities and many religions who were right there with us to help us arrive at this point in our history.

And I thank you so much for this time to mention some of the great ones, and some of those who were great but did not receive the acclaim that they richly deserve. And I thank you again. God bless you, and God bless America.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congressman GREEN. And thank you for reminding us of the many, many unsung heroes and heroines on whose shoulders we also stand here today.

This is Black History Month, and on many occasions throughout February the Congressional Black Caucus will be here on the floor to talk about the ones that we know and those that we don't hear much about. There is a lot of our history that of course we're very proud of—the Long March to Freedom, the march for the right to vote, and today, where we now have 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus. But we also have history that we're not going

back to; and SHEILA JACKSON LEE, when she was speaking earlier, reminded us of some of that history.

Going back to the other topic of our Special Order, the right to vote and protecting that right to vote, tomorrow the Congressional Black Caucus, led by our chairman, Reverend Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER, will be submitting a House resolution condemning the passage of legislation that would unduly burden an American citizen's ability to vote, and opposing any State election law or proposed legislation that would have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities across this country.

When we introduce this, I think this is clearly a resolution that would signify the sense of Congress. It should be a resolution that every Member, Republican and Democrat, should support, supporting the right of every American citizen to vote freely and to have that vote counted. And we would invite all of the Members of the House to join us in that resolution, to become cosponsors, and we would ask the leadership to bring it to the floor for a vote.

Again, it condemns the passage of legislation that would unduly burden an American citizen's ability to vote and opposes any of those State election laws or proposed laws that would have a disproportionate impact, because historically we know that people of color have been barred from voting.

The passage of these restrictive voting laws, the resolution reminds us, is reminiscent of the Jim Crow-era poll taxes and literacy tests that disenfranchised thousands of African Americans. It also reminds us that these laws do more to suppress the right to vote than to protect our electoral system. There's a lot of talk about these laws being passed and proposed because of fraud in the election system, but there's no proof that there is any fraud. So these laws are really about suppressing the right to vote.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the significance of February as Black History Month. Black History Month was first observed in 1976, and has become a successful effort to bring a greater understanding of African American history to all people in the U.S. Since the first observance of Black History Month, this country has seen increased recognition of the numerous contributions and sacrifices that African Americans have made throughout the United States.

From the pioneering inventions of Garrett A. Morgan, to the famous writings of Maya

Angelou, African Americans have been responsible for many of the successes and innovations that have defined our Nation. Since Black History Month was first conceived, we recognized these ground-breaking accomplishments and celebrated them together as a country.

However, every great triumph is not without tribulation. Much of what Black History Month is about is the recognition of the suffering that African Americans have had to endure. After slavery was abolished, Black Americans still faced racial intolerance and inequality. We need only to look to history to reflect on a period when African Americans were denied the right to vote.

Even with passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, many still chose to circumvent the law and disenfranchise voters. From literacy tests to poll taxes, these tactics were designed to keep U.S. citizens from exercising their right to vote, and to have a voice in a diverse democratic system. It was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was ultimately enacted that these menacing policies were outlawed.

Mr. Speaker, Black History Month goes further than just the recognition of African Americans and their distinct role in shaping U.S. history. Black History Month is very much about our struggle as a Nation to uphold our democratic principles of fairness and equality for all. The struggle and triumph that is honored during this important time has come to benefit every American—regardless of their gender, race, or creed—by furthering a culture of equality, fairness, and justice. These important lessons from our past are ones that we must never forget as we move triumphantly into the future.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CLYBURN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. ENGEL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Mr. LYNCH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. POE of Texas (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of official business.

Ms. BUERKLE (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of official business.

#### BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on February 6, 2012 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 588. To redesignate the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge as the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.