

By: West, Royce

S.C.R. No. 38

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, African Americans won the right to vote with the  
2 1870 ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S.  
3 Constitution, but were often prevented from exercising that right  
4 for more than a century through the use of literacy tests, poll  
5 taxes, and physical intimidation; and

6 WHEREAS, The work of the civil rights movement to abolish  
7 these unfair barriers to voting directed at African Americans led  
8 to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; this landmark  
9 legislation was signed into law by native Texan President Lyndon  
10 Baines Johnson and strengthened in 1975 with the help of celebrated  
11 Texan, member of the U.S. Congress, and former member of the Texas  
12 Senate, the late Honorable Barbara Jordan; and

13 WHEREAS, In its 1975 report *The Voting Rights Act: Ten Years*  
14 *After*, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recommended that the  
15 Voting Rights Act cover language minorities; responding to that  
16 report, the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Senate  
17 Judiciary Committee heard seven days of testimony that highlighted  
18 systemic discrimination experienced by language minorities in the  
19 voting process in a number of states, including Texas; and

20 WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits the  
21 reintroduction of voter discrimination by requiring the U.S.  
22 attorney general or the U.S. District Court for the District of  
23 Columbia to review all proposed election procedure changes in  
24 specified jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory election

1 practices to prevent any attempt to dilute minority voting  
2 strength; and

3 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act has proven its effectiveness  
4 by drastically reducing the gap in voter registration between  
5 African Americans and Anglos and contributing to the ever  
6 increasing number of African American legislators since the  
7 mid-1960s; the Act is considered the most successful piece of civil  
8 rights legislation ever passed by congress and is integral to the  
9 continued protection of political participation by minority groups  
10 in this country; and

11 WHEREAS, Enshrined in the Declaration of Independence are the  
12 core American values that "all men are created equal" and that our  
13 government may rule only with "the consent of the governed"; to this  
14 end, the Congress of the United States has strengthened and  
15 reauthorized the expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act three  
16 times, in 1970, 1975, and 1982; but with Section 5 of the Voting  
17 Rights Act scheduled to expire in 2007, the time again has arrived  
18 for the congress to reaffirm the values for which our country has  
19 become the envy of the world; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas  
21 hereby respectfully memorialize the Congress of the United States  
22 to reaffirm its commitment to protecting the rights of minorities  
23 in the United States, and the principle that the government derives  
24 its right to govern from those it governs, by reauthorizing Section  
25 5 of the Voting Rights Act in 2007; and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
27 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to

S.C.R. No. 38

1 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
2 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the  
3 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this  
4 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
5 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.