

By: Miles

H.C.R. No. 117

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The United States Congress passed the Voting Rights
2 Act on August 6, 1965, and more than four decades later, this
3 legislation continues to play a vital role in preventing and
4 addressing real threats to a fundamental right of every American;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, One of the most effective civil rights laws in
7 history, the Voting Rights Act was designed to enforce rights that
8 had been granted to minority voters nearly a century earlier by the
9 Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution;
10 although these amendments had prohibited racial discrimination in
11 voting, communities of color continued to face disenfranchisement
12 from discriminatory state voting laws; and

13 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act immediately invalidated the
14 worst Jim Crow laws in the South and greatly increased minority
15 participation in the electoral process; moreover, the Act opened
16 the way for the election of more officials from minority
17 backgrounds; in the mid-1960s, there were only about 70 African
18 American elected officials in the South, and by the turn of the 21st
19 century, there were some 5,000; and

20 WHEREAS, In recent years, the Voting Rights Act has helped
21 Latinos make similar gains; the number of Latinos serving in
22 elected office rose from about 3,700 in 1996 to more than 5,800 in
23 2011; and

24 WHEREAS, Most provisions in the Voting Rights Act are

1 permanent, notably the portions that guarantee that no one may be
2 denied the right to vote because of his or her race or color; some
3 enforcement-related provisions require periodic reauthorization,
4 however, and over the years, Congress has repeatedly extended them
5 because many state and local governments have continued to erect
6 barriers to minority political participation; these renewals were
7 endorsed by Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and George H. W. Bush,
8 and most recently, President George W. Bush, who signed the Voting
9 Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006; that
10 legislation passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support after
11 house and senate hearings exhaustively examined a new generation of
12 tactics having discriminatory impact, including at-large
13 elections, annexations, last-minute polling place relocations, and
14 redistricting; and

15 WHEREAS, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a call for a
16 strong voting rights law, and the Voting Rights Act was enacted
17 during his presidency; recognizing and upholding the legacy of this
18 great Texan will promote equality for all citizens; and

19 WHEREAS, In the past, the Supreme Court has consistently
20 upheld the authority of Congress over the VRA, including Section 5;
21 settled case law supports our historic reliance on Congress to
22 develop remedies for discrimination and to create uniform federal
23 laws that ensure each citizen can enter the voting booth with the
24 certainty that his or her vote will be accurately and fairly
25 counted; and

26 WHEREAS, Sadly, attempts at voter suppression have not ended,
27 as Congress recognized in 2006 when it renewed the landmark Voting

1 Rights Act for another 25 years; if the United States is to continue
2 to serve as a beacon of democracy in the world, we cannot allow the
3 discriminatory practices of the past to resurface; now, therefore,
4 be it

5 RESOLVED, That the 83rd Legislature of the State of Texas
6 hereby express its support for the Voting Rights Act and urge the
7 United States Congress to protect every citizen's right to
8 participate in the political process by making permanent the
9 provisions of Section 5 of that legislation; and, be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
11 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
12 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
13 Representatives of the United States Congress, to the United States
14 Supreme Court, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to
15 Congress with the request that this resolution be officially
16 entered in the Congressional Record.