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By:  Reynolds H.C.R. No. 38

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The history of the United States has been tarnished by discriminatory policies that suppress minority voting rights and threaten the foundation of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, civil rights activists the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis led a peaceful march against voting inequality and were met with extreme violence; this event prompted a public outcry and inspired Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act later that year; the bipartisan legislation allowed direct federal oversight and protections of election processes to prevent states from suppressing minority voters; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, a landmark Supreme Court decision weakened the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by ending the preclearance process, which required jurisdictions with a history of voting discrimination to submit changes to voting policies for federal approval before implementing them; this limited the federal government's ability to deter voter suppression, and North Carolina and Texas immediately passed voting changes that were previously rejected for preclearance; these laws remained during several elections before federal courts later determined that they were discriminatory; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Representatives Terri Sewell and John Lewis coauthored the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which was renamed in honor of Congressman Lewis after his passing; this bill would restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 while updating the coverage criteria to reflect current conditions and apply to all states; furthermore, the bill focuses the preclearance process on a set of discriminatory measures, requires reasonable public notice for voting changes, and allows the Attorney General to request the presence of federal observers in places at risk of racial discrimination in voting; and

WHEREAS, Congressman John Lewis dedicated his life to protecting Americans' right to vote, and Congress should pass his legislation to prevent voter suppression and uphold our nation's core value of equality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.