

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 139

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding commitment to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 9, 2001

Mr. CUMMINGS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding commitment to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Whereas the 15th Amendment of the Constitution guarantees American citizens the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude;

Whereas even after ratification of the 15th Amendment, various election procedures (i.e., poll taxes, literacy tests, and vouching requirements) by certain states diluted the impact of votes cast by African Americans or prevented minorities from voting altogether;

Whereas Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to address minority disfranchisement and to codify and effectuate the 15th Amendment's permanent guarantee that, throughout the nation, no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color;

Whereas Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1965 at the height of the civil rights movement in response to lawsuits claiming and compelling evidence of continuing interference with attempts by African American citizens to exercise their right to vote;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits any person acting under color of law or otherwise from intimidating or denying any eligible person from voting;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 makes it illegal for any State or local government to use election procedures that are not equally open to minority voters, or that give minority voters less opportunity than other voters to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice to public office;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 protects minority language group members by requiring particular jurisdictions to print ballots and other election materials in the minority language as well as in English, and to have oral translation assistance available at the polls where necessary;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 gives the Department of Justice the authority to bring suit in Federal court to challenge those practices that it has determined are racially discriminatory and to bring Federal criminal charges for voting fraud or intimidation involving racial bias in local or State elections;

Whereas enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been instrumental in increasing voter registration of African Americans, Latinos, and other ethnicities and providing the opportunity for African American and Latino voters to elect representatives of their choice by providing

a vehicle for challenging discriminatory election procedures, further resulting in an increase in African American and Hispanic elected officials;

Whereas on November 7, 2000, American citizens went to the polls to cast their vote for President of the United States; and

Whereas American citizens have leveled numerous charges of election irregularities and minority vote dilution involving African Americans, ethnic groups such as Latinos and Haitians, and other ethnicities that occurred in jurisdictions in a number of States, effectively disfranchising thousands of citizens in the 2000 election: Now, therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

2 (1) the Congress—

3 (A) condemns election procedures that re-
4 sult in minority vote dilution and
5 disfranchisement and any person acting under
6 color of law or otherwise engaged in intimi-
7 dating or denying any eligible person from vot-
8 ing;

9 (B) recognizes the significance of the 15th
10 Amendment, which guarantees American citi-
11 zens the right to vote, regardless of race, color,
12 or previous condition of servitude; and

13 (C) reaffirms its commitment to the Voting
14 Rights Act of 1965, which prohibits any person
15 acting under color of law or otherwise from in-

1 timidating or denying any eligible person from
2 voting;

3 (2) the United States Commission on Civil
4 Rights should—

5 (A) compile data on reports of voting
6 irregularities arising out of the November 7,
7 2000 Presidential election and investigate such
8 allegations; and

9 (B) provide a comprehensive report of such
10 reported voting irregularities and the Commis-
11 sion's findings to Congress and the Department
12 of Justice; and

13 (3) the President, Attorney General, and De-
14 partment of Justice should—

15 (A) make the elimination of minority vote
16 dilution and disfranchisement a top priority of
17 the United States Government;

18 (B) take all necessary steps and resources
19 to thoroughly investigate all charges of election
20 irregularities and minority vote dilution and
21 disfranchisement;

22 (C) vigorously, promptly, and fully enforce
23 the Voting Rights Act of 1965, by bringing suit
24 in Federal court to challenge those practices
25 that it has determined are racially discrimina-

1 tory and Federal criminal charges for voting
2 fraud or intimidation involving racial bias
3 occurring in local or State elections; and

4 (D) explore all options to prevent such
5 disfranchisement in future elections such that
6 every American citizen is secured their right to
7 vote, regardless of their race or color.

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