

Reps. Lemmons, III, Lemmons, Jr., Condino, Cushingberry, Miller, Bennett, Kehrl, Vagnozzi, Zelenko, Murphy, Virgil Smith, Farrah, Clack, Hopgood, Kathleen Law, Leland, Polidori, Espinoza, McDowell, Alma Smith, Lipsey, Tobocman, Kolb, Phillips, Gonzales, Hood, Garfield, Sheltrown, Waters, Byrum, Clemente, Anderson, McConico, Cheeks, Accavitti, Bieda, Brown, Dillon, Gleason, Mayes, Newell and Sak offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 51.

A resolution to memorialize the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Whereas, This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which is widely considered to be the most successful piece of civil rights legislation ever enacted by the United States Congress. The landmark act codifies and effectuates the 15th Amendment's guarantee that no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color. Over the years, this legislation has successfully removed direct and indirect barriers to voting by African Americans and other racial minorities; and

Whereas, Section 5 of the act requires jurisdictions with histories of racial bigotry and discrimination to obtain prior approval from the Department of Justice before adopting any new qualifications, prerequisites, standards, practices, or procedures related to voting. Prior approval is only to be granted if the proposed changes do not have the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color; and

Whereas, Although the Voting Rights Act of 1965 does not expire, Section 5, as well as other sections of the act, are required to be extended by Congress. These sections, which have been remarkably effective in preventing covered jurisdictions from evading the act, were extended in 1970, 1975, and 1982 and are up for reauthorization in 2007. If Section 5 is not extended, then covered jurisdictions may weaken the voting strength of African Americans by challenging majority-black districts, changing elected positions to appointive ones, and transforming district elections to at-large elections; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.