

## CHAPTER 228

House Concurrent Resolution No. 5037

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION memorializing the Congress of the United States to extend certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, a group of civil rights marchers gathered at the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama, and their efforts to advance equal voting rights brought a brutal and bloody response. Eight days later President Johnson called for a comprehensive and effective voting rights bill to guarantee to our citizens the rights contained in the 14th and 15th amendments to the United States constitution. A bipartisan congress approved landmark legislation, and on August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law; and

WHEREAS, Considered one of the most successful pieces of civil rights legislation ever adopted, the act bans literacy tests and poll taxes, outlaws intimidation during the electoral process, authorizes federal election monitors and observers and creates various means for protecting and enforcing racial and language minority voting rights. The act was amended in 1975 to facilitate equal political opportunity for language minority citizens and in 1982 to protect the rights of voters with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Despite noteworthy progress from 40 years of enforcement of the act, voter inequities, disparities and obstacles still remain for many minority voters; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the act is scheduled to expire in 2007. This section contains a special enforcement provision targeted at those areas of the country where congress believes the potential for discrimination to be high and prohibits any change affecting voters until the attorney general has determined that the change will not worsen the ability of minority voters to vote. Sections 4(f) and 203 will also expire in 2007. These sections require bilingual voting assistance for language minority communities in certain jurisdictions. The language minority provisions apply to four language minority groups: American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaskan natives and persons of Spanish heritage; and

WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act is a critical link in the struggle to enfranchise the politically marginalized. Without reauthorization of these special provisions of the act, America risks a resurgence of voter discrimination: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas, the Senate concurring therein:* That the Kansas legislature memorializes the Congress of the United States to extend these critical provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of State provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each member of the Kansas legislative delegation.

Adopted by the House April 28, 2006.

Adopted by the Senate May 5, 2006.

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