

## Anniversary of The Voting Rights Act of 1965

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as we enter into the month of August, I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate the anniversary of The Voting Rights Act of 1965. On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. The date marks a pivotal moment in our country's progress in extending equal membership in the political processes to every American. The right to vote is a fundamental principle of all democracies. Yet, in our great nation whose founding fathers and documents boasted of its creation to promote equality, there was a substantial period of history during which minority men and women were barred from that very right. The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right to vote for every citizen, but the discriminatory practices of Jim Crow in the antebellum south used taxes, literacy tests, gerrymandering, and language discrimination to prevent Blacks from voting and taking part in the government. Without the right to vote, many African-Americans were subject to intolerable injustices and appalling prejudice.

The Voting Rights Act represents a culmination of the great efforts of civil rights organizations and activists to inform the nation of the extensive disenfranchisement taking place throughout the country. The anniversary of the enactment of this historic law provides an opportunity to acknowledge these activists. Most notably, their tremendous dedication and uncompromising pursuit of equality took the form of peaceful marches from Selma to Montgomery that were met with vicious attacks by state and local police forces. These events caught the attention of the President and Congress, contributing to a commitment to new civil rights legislation to counter the resistance and discrimination laws within the states. The enactment of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 allowed African-Americans across the country to finally have a say in the functioning of the country. Today, I celebrate the anniversary of this law as a reflection of what our country represents: a nation pledged to representing the views, values, and beliefs of all the people it serves.