
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 969 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY A. DAVIS, MADDEN, HILL-EVANS, McCARTER, McCLINTON,
READSHAW, KINSEY, D. MILLER, HOWARD, FREEMAN, SCHLOSSBERG,
WILLIAMS, McNEILL, GREEN, DRISCOLL, GALLOWAY, GAINY,
DELLOSO, DEASY, INNAMORATO, HARRIS, SANCHEZ AND DeLUCA,
AUGUST 13, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 13, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the United States Senate to pass the John R. Lewis Voting
2 Rights Act.

3 WHEREAS, The legacy of slavery in the United States has had a
4 significant influence on American history and policy; and

5 WHEREAS, Following the Civil War, the period of
6 Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877 saw Congress pass laws that
7 helped progress civil and political rights for African
8 Americans; and

9 WHEREAS, Most notable among the laws passed during
10 Reconstruction were three amendments to the United States
11 Constitution, including the Thirteenth Amendment which abolished
12 slavery in 1865, the Fourteenth Amendment which guaranteed
13 African Americans the rights of American citizenship in 1868 and
14 the Fifteenth Amendment which guaranteed Black men the
15 constitutional right to vote in 1870; and

16 WHEREAS, Despite progress from the constitutional amendments,

1 hardships for African-American citizens continued; and

2 WHEREAS, With the Compromise of 1877, the last of the Federal
3 troops in the South withdrew, effectively allowing lynching,
4 disenfranchisement and segregationist laws to proliferate; and

5 WHEREAS, By the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement began to
6 form and was dedicated to activism for equal rights and
7 treatment of African Americans in the United States; and

8 WHEREAS, Among the prominent activists during this time was
9 the late Representative John R. Lewis, who participated in
10 freedom rides on interstate buses, was the youngest speaker at
11 the 1963 March on Washington and helped organize the peaceful
12 march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama in what is now
13 called "Bloody Sunday"; and

14 WHEREAS, John Lewis famously believed in getting in "good
15 trouble, necessary trouble" in an effort to bring about
16 transformative change in America; and

17 WHEREAS, John Lewis' leadership, among the help of countless
18 others, ultimately led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of
19 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

20 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act, signed by President Lyndon B.
21 Johnson on August 6, 1965, expanded the Fourteenth and Fifteenth
22 Amendments by banning racial discrimination in voting practices
23 in response to barriers such as voter intimidation, literacy
24 tests and poll taxes that prevented African Americans from
25 voting for nearly a century; and

26 WHEREAS, Since 1965, the Voting Rights Act has been amended
27 in order to extend protections, however, on June 25, 2013, the
28 Supreme Court struck down a key provision; and

29 WHEREAS, The majority of the Supreme Court ruled that the
30 coverage formula in Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act was

1 unconstitutional and allowed nine states, mostly in the South,
2 to change their election laws without Federal approval; and

3 WHEREAS, On February 26, 2019, H.R. 4, originally titled the
4 Voting Rights Advancement Act, was first introduced to the
5 United States House of Representatives and passed by a vote of
6 228 - 187 on December 6, 2019; and

7 WHEREAS, H.R. 4 restores the provisions of the Voting Rights
8 Act weakened by the Supreme Court decision by utilizing
9 contemporary data to expand and protect African Americans' right
10 to vote by making it more difficult for modern-day voter
11 suppression tactics to be instituted; and

12 WHEREAS, Following the passing of John Lewis, a renewed push
13 to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act has emerged with the
14 act being renamed to the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act in
15 order to honor his memory; therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the United
17 States Senate to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act.