

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0202R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers Mitchell, Kraft, Young, Holton, D'Adamo,
Conaway, Welch, Rawlings Blake, Clarke, Harris, Curran, Spector, Branch, Reisinger
Introduced and adopted: August 14, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**An Open Letter of Appreciation
to the Maryland Delegation to the 109th Congress of the United States
for Passage of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King
Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006**

FOR the purpose of congratulating the Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 109th Congress for their participation in adopting this Act that will “ensure that the right of all citizens to vote, including the right to register to vote and cast meaningful votes, is preserved and protected as guaranteed by the Constitution” of the United States.

Recitals

On July 27th, the Office of the Press Secretary announced that the President of the United States had signed into law the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 that reauthorized the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) that “was designed to restore the birthright of every American – the right to choose our leaders. It has been vital to guaranteeing the right to vote for generations of Americans and has helped millions of our citizens enjoy the full promise of freedom. In signing this bill [the President] honored the memory of three women who devoted their lives to the struggle for civil rights....”

“The President has committed his Administration to vigorously enforce the provisions of this law and to defend it in court. The President will also continue to work with the Congress to ensure that our country lives up to our guiding principle that all men and women are created equal. The Administration will continue to build on the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement to help ensure that every child enjoys the opportunities America offers. These opportunities include the right to a decent education in a good school, the chance to own a home or small business, and the hope that comes from knowing you can rise in our society through hard work and using your talents.”

The signing by the President of the Reauthorization of the 1965 Voting Rights Act was the culmination of the hard work of the members of Congress to steward passage of this law through the House of Representatives, by a vote of 390-33, and through the Senate, by a vote of 98-0, rebuffing efforts by Southern conservatives to relax federal oversight of their states where voting rights violations remain commonplace occurrences for African Americans and other ethnic minorities, in a debate haunted by the ghosts of the Civil Rights movement and those dedicated to freedom whose fearless actions brought about the enactment of the initial Voting Rights Act of 1965.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 In the debate over the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, current members of Congress
2 recalled the brutality faced by those who fought the good fight in 1965. In March of that year,
3 civil rights activists, who marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama to
4 protest the unfair and racist practices the kept African Americans off the Voter Rolls, were met
5 on the other side by Alabama state troopers and a civilian posse bearing tear gas, billy clubs, and
6 whips. The group of state-sanctioned hooligans brutally attacked the group of peacefully
7 protesting men, women, and children. The ugly inhumanity of the incident sparked the President
8 to announce that he would submit legislation that would bring African Americans into the civic
9 life of our nation. Five months after Selma, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into
10 law.

11 For some parts of the country, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 marked the 1st appearance of
12 African Americans on the voting rolls since the days of Reconstruction following the Civil War.
13 Passage of the current legislation is cause for celebration, but it is also a time for reflection and
14 for rededication to ensuring the rights of all people to the fruits of a democratic society. We
15 thank our representatives for their work in ensuring the legal protection of our right to pursue our
16 dreams of equality while we recognize that on some fronts, as in housing, education, and
17 employment, equality continues to elude us – *the fight must go on.*

18 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
19 Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 109th Congress are congratulated for their
20 participation in adopting the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting
21 Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 that will “ensure that the right of all
22 citizens to vote, including the right to register to vote and cast meaningful votes, is preserved and
23 protected as guaranteed by the Constitution” of the United States.

24 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
25 Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 109th Congress, the Honorable Members
26 of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the
27 Executive Director of the NAACP, the Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of State
28 Relations, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.