

Commemorating the Life of Dr. King Matsui Urges Reauthorization of Voting Rights Act

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Sacramento, CA – As our nation celebrates the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) advocated that we take advantage of this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to all of our citizens, regardless of race and reauthorize portions of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) before they expire in 2007. One of Dr. King’s most enduring campaigns led to the signing of the VRA in 1965. The VRA is considered one of the greatest achievements of the Civil Rights Movement because it addresses a defining principle of our nation, political inclusion.

“Because of the inspiration in the words and actions of Dr. King, thousands of people who came to make up the civil rights movement forced this nation to stand face-to-face with the wrongs of ideas like segregation and separate but equal,” said Congresswoman Matsui.

“What could be more important to Dr. King’s legacy than ensuring that all citizens’ not only have the right to vote, but that their ability to vote is protected. The Voting Rights Act has been instrumental in guaranteeing that millions of voters’ voices, which otherwise might not be heard, are heard.”

Provisions which are set to expire include a requirement that areas with a documented history of discriminatory voting practices obtain federal approval prior to changes in election laws or voting procedures, as well as a provision that sets forth criteria for election monitoring by the Department of Justice. These provisions have significantly impacted the

federal government's ability to protect the right to vote and must be renewed.

"The Voting Rights Act has been the nation's most effective mechanism for protecting minority voting rights and it is imperative that we renew these provisions to ensure that these rights are safeguarded. I am committed to furthering the causes that Dr. King so effectively fought for during the Civil Rights Movement and will work hard in the coming months to ensure the Voting Rights Act does not expire."

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