

The original documents are located in Box 43, folder “Voting Rights Act Extension” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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DRAFT - 2:00 p.m.
July 15, 1975

Dear Hugh:

With the number of important legislative decisions that must be made by the Congress before the August recess, it is most important that a high priority be given by the Senate to the extension of the temporary provision of the Voting Rights Act.

These provisions expire August 6, 1975, and it is imperative that Congress continue this important Act.

My position is this: With time so short, and the Senate engaged in other responsibilities, it may be best as a practical matter to extend the Voting Rights Act as it is, or for the Senate to accept the House bill (H.R. 6219). In the interest of making certain that the Voting Rights Act is continued, I will support either approach.

However, the issue of broadening the Act further has arisen; and it is my view that it would now be appropriate to expand the protection of the Act to all citizens of the United States.



I strongly believe that the right to vote is the foundation of freedom, and that this right must be protected.

That is why when this issue was first being considered in 1965, I co-sponsored with Representative William McCulloch of Ohio a voting rights bill which would have effectively guaranteed voting rights to eligible citizens throughout the whole country.

After it became clear at that time that the McCulloch-Ford Bill would not pass, I voted for the most practical alternative, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In 1970, I supported extending the Act.

Last January, when this issue first came before me as President, I proposed that Congress again extend for five years the temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The House of Representatives, in H.R. 6219, has broadened this important law in this way: (1) The House bill would extend the temporary provisions of the Act for ten years, instead of five; and (2) the

House bill would extend the temporary provisions of the Act so as to include discrimination against language minorities, thereby extending application of the Act from the present seven States to eight additional States, in whole or in part.

In light of the House extension of the Voting Rights Act for ten years and to eight more States, I believe this is the appropriate time and opportunity to extend the Voting Rights Act nationwide.

This is one nation, and what is right for fifteen States is right for fifty States.

Numerous civil rights leaders have pointed out that substantial numbers of Black citizens have been denied the right to vote in many of our large cities in areas other than the seven Southern states where the present temporary provisions apply. Discrimination in voting in any part of this nation is equally undesirable.

As I said in 1965, when I introduced legislation on this subject, a responsible, comprehensive voting rights bill should "correct voting discrimination wherever it occurs throughout the length and breadth of this great land."

I urge the Senate to move promptly--first, to assure that the temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act do not lapse. As amendments are taken up, I commend for your consideration the approach which Representative McCulloch and I proposed in 1965 to extend the Voting Rights Act nationwide. Should the Senate extend the Act to American voters wherever they live, I am confident the House of Representatives would concur.

I shall be grateful if you will convey to the members of the Senate my views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

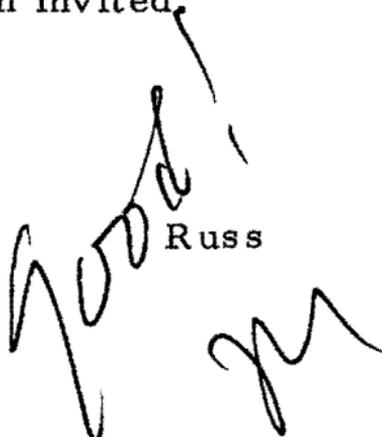


August 5

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack --

I spoke with Bill Baroody re the attached. This signing ceremony is all set up for tomorrow. DeBaca's proposed list was revised and expanded and all appropriate people have been invited.


Russ



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 4, 1975

Russ --

Get back to DeBaca, but coordinate with Max
and Barody. Also send a copy to Max.

Jack

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
FROM: FERNANDO E. ^FC. DE BACA
SUBJECT: Voting Rights Bill

Now that the Voting Rights Bill (HR 6219) has been passed by the House and Senate, it would appear to be in the President's best interest to hold a brief White House signing ceremony with key Black, Spanish Speaking, and other language minority group leaders present. This would allow Ted Marrs, Stan Scott, John Calhoun, and I, who deal with this significant voter segment, the opportunity to place the President in the best possible leadership position with respect to this important bill.

I would recommend at a minimum that the following Hispanic leaders be invited to the ceremony.

Mr. Manuel Fierro
President
National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens
400 First Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20001
638-4483

Mr. Al Perez
Associate Counsel
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
1028 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1007
Washington, D. C. 20036
659-5166

Mr. Raul Yzaguirre
Executive Director
National Council of La Raza
1025 15th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005
659-1251

Mr. Jaspar "Jay" Garcia
Director
Spanish Speaking Division - RNC
310 First Street, S. E.
Washington, D. C. 20003
484-6780

Mrs. Ada Pena
National Vice President
League of United Latin American Citizens
400 First Street, N. W. Suite 716
Washington, D. C. 20001
362-6100

Mr. Lupe Saldana
State Chairman
American GI Forum
5600 Fishers Lane
Parklawn Building - Room 1022
Rockville, Maryland 20852
443-1960