

Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's



Capitol Report



50th Anniversary Of The Voting Rights Act

The 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) is one of the most influential pillars of American civil rights law and profoundly altered social and civil life in the United States. This transformative statute made discriminatory practices that disenfranchised voters, such as poll taxes and mandatory literacy test, illegal. President Johnson considered the Voting Rights Act his greatest legislative achievement.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the VRA. However instead of celebrating decades of accomplishments we find ourselves fighting dauntingly similar battles to those of 50 years ago when the less fortunate were prevented from voting. Efforts to prevent minorities from voting resurfaced two years go with *Shelby County v Holder*, in which the Supreme Court invalidated the provision of Section 4 of the VRA that required nine states to get pre-approval from the U.S. Department of Justice for any new election laws or redistricting plans. This opened the door for increased voting suppression in states such as Texas, where a recent voter ID law has been proposed that aims to prevent minority voter participation.

Although this struggle is currently underway, there is recent cause for celebration surrounding the VRA. On August 5, 2015 the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the district court's ruling that the Texas Voter Identification Law directly violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. LULAC, the nation's largest and oldest civil rights volunteer based organization that empowers Latinos, was a main plaintiff in the case and the decision constituted a win for minority voters in Texas.

"We cannot be discouraged by the struggles that still lie ahead of us. We must continue to put pressure on Congress to restore the crucial protections provided in the VRA. These protections are pivotal in securing the livelihood of minority communities across the nation," urged Rep. Roberto Alonzo.



Fair Food Program Sweeps the Nation

The Fair Food program is a groundbreaking partnership between farmers and farmworkers in Florida's tomato industry. It ensures that workers on participating farms are treated fairly, specifically in regards to wages and working conditions.

This partnership between Florida Tomato Growers and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is truly unique in nature. The power of this innovative system came to fruition last January when Walmart, the world's largest retail, joined the Fair Food Program. On January 14th, 2014 Walmart pledged not only to support the program in Florida, but to help it grow across the nation.

"The Fair Food Program is the most progressive thing happening in agriculture anywhere in the United States. There is no initiative closer to the heart of our nation's agrarian ideals than a system where people are treated justly and with respect," stated Rep. Roberto Alonzo.

This program is a testament not only to the determination of the CIW, but also to the vision of some of the biggest farming corporations in the world. Supporting the Fair Food Program will have nationwide ramifications as more retailers sign on and spread the program far and wide.

Hispanic Health Care Workers in High Demand



One of the results of having an ever growing Hispanic population in this country is the need for qualified Hispanic health care workers to address their medical needs. It is not only a matter of communicating with patients in Spanish. Moreover, being intimately acquainted with the Hispanic culture is what makes Hispanic health care workers essential to the health and welfare of our changing demographics.

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