

The Voting Rights Act: 50 Years Later

[APPLAUSE]

THE PRESIDENT: Right now, in 2015, there are laws across this country designed to make it harder for people to vote. As we speak, more such laws are being proposed.

Meanwhile, the Voting Rights Act -- the culmination of so much blood, so much sweat and tears; the product of so much sacrifice in the face of wanton violence -- the Voting Rights Act stands weakened, its future subject to political rank.

How can that be?

The Voting Rights Act was one of the crowning achievements of our democracy, the result of Republican and Democratic efforts. President Reagan signed its renewal when he was in office; President George W. Bush signed its renewal when he was in office; 100 members of Congress have come here today to honor people who were willing to die for the right to protect it.

If we want to honor this day, let that 100 go back to Washington and gather 400 more, and together pledge to make it their mission to restore that law this year!

That's how we honor those on this bridge.

[APPLAUSE]