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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Members of the House of Representatives

From: Representative Austin Davis

Date: August 6, 2020

RE: **Urging the United States Senate to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act**

Since the founding of the United States of America, African Americans have been subjected to discrimination, segregation, and systemic oppression. The fight for equity has been strenuous, and although progress has been made in recent years, we are still a great deal away from equality.

“Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

These words, echoed by the late Representative John Lewis, have become increasingly prevalent since the day they were uttered. Representative Lewis understood that a system cannot fail those it was never designed to protect; that is why he advocated for justice in the manner he did. He demonstrated what “good trouble” looked like on March 7, 1965, when he led over 600 marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in what we now call “Bloody Sunday.” At the time, this march was considered an “unlawful assembly.” However, Representative Lewis acknowledged it as good, necessary trouble.

His actions that day were instrumental in the progress for civil rights and it eventually led to the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Representative Lewis has always been a champion for civil rights and equal liberties for all Americans, and he advocated for justice and equality until the day he passed away.

So on this day August 6th, 2020 the 55th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, in memory of John R. Lewis, and in supporting African Americans in their continued struggle for equality, I am asking my fellow Representatives to co-sponsor my resolution which would call on the United States Senate to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act. This legislation restores provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that were severely impacted by a 2013 Supreme Court decision which led to a rise in voter suppression tactics throughout the nation.

As one unified voice, Pennsylvania can proclaim that every citizen should have an equal opportunity to vote, regardless of race.