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Expanding the Right to Vote

Across the American Southwest in recent months, a complaint has been made that is striking in its familiarity. The complaint is that American citizens are being systematically denied the right to vote because of their ethnic background. These citizens, Mexican-Americans, have provided Congress and the courts with examples of how their insistence on the right to vote has been challenged by local voting registrars. The evidence includes instances of blatant gerrymandering, cases where the names of aspiring voters were not entered in the voting books after they thought they had registered, and instances in which community members have been denied the opportunity to serve as deputy registrars to be in a position to oversee the registration process. The U.S. Civil Rights Commission has confirmed many of the contentions in a study of its own.

The reason all this has a familiar ring is that the complaints of the Mexican-Americans of the Southwest sound remarkably like the complaints of the black people of Alabama and Mississippi only 10 years ago. After much national anguish, the remedy for the Deep South situation was found. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Not all the voting problems of the black people of the South disappeared with the passage of that act. Much remains to be done, but much progress has been made. The Voting Rights Act has proved to be a worthwhile device for correcting historic inequities in the voting patterns of the South.

Now, Americans of Hispanic background have called on the Congress to include them specifically under the act in those jurisdictions in which the systematic denial of the franchise is still a way of life. The Voting Rights Act is up for renewal this year, and Mexican-American groups have asked Congress for its expansion. Reps. Herman Badillo of New York, Barbara Jordan of Texas and Edward Roybal of California have submitted a bill (HR 5552) that encompasses the needs of the Mexican-Americans and others of Hispanic descent for relief. It would amend the Voting Rights Act by making it illegal to conduct English-only elections in jurisdictions with large numbers of Spanish-speaking citizens, and it would bring in federal registrars where large numbers of the Spanish speaking are not registered. It would place those jurisdictions under federal supervision until such time as a majority of the Hispanic people had been registered. And during that time, no changes in the voting procedures could be made without the consent of the attorney general or the U.S. District Court. Moreover, the elections would be supervised in those areas of the country where Mexican-Americans now feel threatened when they attempt to vote.

Texas and California are among the states where the Mexican-American community is feeling the pressure most, but there are problems elsewhere in the country that could, and should, be redressed by the expansion of the act.

There have been expressions of concern that the cause of civil rights could be harmed by this attempt to expand the law, notably because of the question of whether the Supreme Court would sustain a law that forbids English-only election procedures. Since the Supreme Court spoke on that subject last fall (New York v. United States) and said English-only elections were a restrictive device against the Spanish-speaking, that concern appears to be of little consequence. In any event, the Badillo-Jordan-Roybal bill contains a clause that is designed to permit a test of the new sections of the act without endangering the whole of it, so there is little reason to fear losing the entire Voting Rights Act in the course of trying to fashion legislative relief for the Mexican-American community.

As matters now stand, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has been fighting inch-by-inch in the courts for relief from a variety of restrictive devices in several states. Even though their cause has often been upheld, the time and expense involved in court suits have been needlessly burdensome. The Voting Rights Act was intended to make certain that the 14th and 15th Amendments were obeyed in the case of blacks. Its principles should be applied now in the case of Americans of Hispanic descent.
House Unit Moves to Add Areas To Voting Rights Act Coverage

WASHINGTON, April 17 (AP)—A House subcommittee voted today to add Texas and Alaska to six Southern states wholly covered by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

An amendment to the act approved by a Judiciary subcommittee would also add Florida, Colorado, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Utah to 12 other states partly covered by the law.

In addition, the law would be broadened to cover new areas of California and Arizona.

Representative Herman Badillo, Democrat of the Bronx who sponsored the proposal, said it would extend the protection of the act to about six million Americans of Spanish heritage as well as to native Alaskans, Indians and Asian-Americans.

No part of Texas is currently under the act. Four Alaskan voting districts are covered.

"I think it is important that we show the spirit of the nineteen-sixties is still alive in the nineteen-seventies," Mr. Badillo said as the panel adopted his proposal without dissent.

The action came as the sub-

Mr. Badillo said that his proposal provided for Justice Department review of any voting law changes in the new jurisdictions. That review procedure already exists for the others.

The proposal would require bilingual ballots and other assistance designed to help non-English speaking minorities vote.

The amendment declares that Congress finds voting discrimination against citizens of language minorities to be "pervasive and national in scope."

"Congress further finds that, where state and local officials conduct elections only in English, language-minority citizens are excluded from participating in this electoral process," reads the amendment.
VOTER PROTECTION SPURRED IN TEXAS


By ERNEST HOLSENDOLPH Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, April 22 —

The state of Texas, faced with the threat of being brought under an expanded Federal voting rights law, has intensified its interest in voter protection legislation of its own.

Texas officials told the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights that in the "past several weeks"—since hearings began on legislation to extend the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and make it apply to Mexican-Americans and others of Spanish descent, as well as blacks—the Texas Legislature was moving quickly on laws to assure the voting rights of minority groups in that state.

In a related development today, the Civil Rights and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee approved an expanded voting rights bill that would include Texas and parts of other states for the first time.

One piece of Texas legislation, according to Mark White, the Texas Secretary of State, is a bill to require all counties in the state with 5 percent or more residents of Spanish ancestry to provide bilingual election and registration materials.

Provides for Inspectors

The bill passed the Texas Senate by a vote of 30 to 1 and was approved by the House, 114 to 18, in a test vote, Mr. White said. A bill in the State Senate would authorize the Secretary of State to name voting inspectors at any polling place on the complaint of 15 citizens.

In addition, the bill would make it a felony for anyone found guilty of "exerciting economic or physical coercion upon a citizen of this state in the exercise of his right to vote," Mr. White said.

Spokesmen for Mexican-American civil rights groups and Representative Barbara C. Jordan, Democrat of Texas, who is co-sponsor of an amendment to protect citizens of Spanish ancestry, said they were impressed by the recent Texas legislative activity.

The spokesmen gave details of how blacks and Mexican-Americans in Texas have been kept from the ballot boxes by intimidation, economic threats and "subtle" abuses. And even in jurisdictions where minorities vote in sizable numbers, their will is undercut by gerrymandering, according to exhibits shown by Prof. Charles Cotrell of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Tex., and George Korbel, formerly an attorney with the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Court Role Cited

"All of the action to ease abuses of voting rights in Texas has come from courts, not the state Legislature," Miss Jordan said, adding: "We have more than bilingual ballots—that won't solve the problem of political, economic and invidious forms of discrimination. The problem in Texas is not just one of language."

She also said the Secretary of State was well-intentioned, "but he can only do so much." The state needed the impetus of the Federal Voting Rights Act, with its requirements that the United States Attorney General approve election changes that could affect minorities, she said.

Then she added, "The [minority] voters need the psychological, spiritual and emotional boost that comes from knowing that you have a forum for correction of abuses."

Representative Edward R. Roybal, Democrat of California, told the Senate subcommittee that more than three million Californians, or 16 percent of the state's population, were of Spanish descent, but that they had only five members in the Legislature and only seven-hundredths of 1 percent of the state's elected officials.

Motivation Questioned

Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, who is a member of the Senate subcommittee, asked Mr. White why Texas had waited until last month to draft voter rights legislation, even though the Federal law had been on the books since 1965.

"I can't talk about motivation," the Texas Secretary of State replied, "but I believe that this legislation goes farther than the national legislation."

"How can we know that when the heat is off you won't go back to the old habits?" Senator Bayh asked, Mr. White did not reply directly to the question, and in response to further questions he conceded that the state laws would not cover gerrymandering and other abuses.

The House bill, which is likely to be acted upon by the whole Congress because it is much further along, could reach the House floor in the second week of May, Congressional sources say. Nonetheless, the bill supporters say that Congress could come under great pressure to meet an Aug. 6 deadline, when the current law will expire.
Panel Blocks Bid to Exempt Texas From '65 Vote Law

WASHINGTON, April 29 (AP) — The House Judiciary Committee overwhelmingly rejected today a proposal that would have exempted Texas from coverage by the Voting Rights Act.

The proposal, offered by Representative Jack Brooks, Democrat of Texas, would not have allowed extension of the act to include a state that had enacted its own bilingual election law. Such a law was recently enacted in Texas.

Mr. Brooks's proposal was offered as an amendment to a bill that would broaden the Voting Rights Act to protect Spanish-Americans and other non-English speaking minorities.

The vote came after Rep. Herman Badillo, Democrat of the Bronx, told the Judiciary Committee that the type of discrimination that prompted passage of the 1965 law to protect blacks was now victimizing Spanish-Americans in Texas and elsewhere.
The Chicanos of Texas May Get Help

By KAYE NORTHCUIT

AUSTIN, Tex.—Texans generally are proud of the size, the wealth and the political importance of their state, three fairly accurate reflections of Texas's real importance nationally. They are somewhat more reticent about discussing the plight of their Spanish-speaking population, which consists largely of 2 million Mexican Americans, or about the population's long history of discrimination and disenfranchisement by the state. Mexican Americans constitute 20 percent of Texas's population and most of them are clustered in South Texas and in the state's urban centers.

However, during the last month Governor Dolph Briscoe, a Democrat, and the Texas Legislature have been doing some soul-searching about Texas's Mexican Americans. Spurred by the move in Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for 10 more years, and to expand its jurisdiction to include persons of Spanish heritage and American Indians, the Texas Legislature has been hard at work trying to push through a series of reform bills in the hope of diluting the federal law.

A measure has been passed that would require all Texas counties with a Spanish-speaking population to provide bilingual registration and election materials. Another bill providing for state inspectors at the polls and making it a third-degree felony to threaten a voter with economic or physical coercion recently was rushed through the Texas Senate within a week. It probably will whiz through the State House of Representatives as well, and the legislature is now considering ways of improving Texas's permanent postcard voter registration system.

These measures seem quite progressive, until one compares them with the federal legislation they are trying to bypass. The Voting Rights Bill was passed in 1965 to protect black voters in the Deep South, and Federal enforcement measures were triggered by a state's or a political subdivision's use of a literacy test as a qualification for voting.

But the House Judiciary Committee by a vote of 27-2 has approved amendments which would cover states where less than 50 per cent of the eligible voters actually voted in the 1972 Presidential election, and where the jurisdiction printed ballots only in the English language when more than 5 percent of the eligible voters rely on another language. The law, which allows federal monitors to oversee elections in the state, county or parish, also requires the state or local officials to get permission from the United States Attorney General before changing any election rules or procedures.

In Congress, only two Texas Representatives, Congresswomen Barbara Jordan and Congressman Bob Krueger, both Democrats, have been working to make the amendments to the Voting Rights Act apply to Texas. Representative Jack Brooks, Democrat of Beaumont, and the second Texan on the Judiciary Committee, voted for the bill in committee, though he had tried unsuccessfully earlier to amend the Federal law so that Texas would be exempt from its provisions. "Well, damned," Brooks told a reporter after his efforts were defeated, "I guess we'll have to learn to vote in Spanish."

In Texas, support for the new law comes mainly from liberals. They are opposed by the political establishment in both parties who do not want to see Federal monitors of Texas elections. Secretary of State Marie White recently told a judiciary subcommittee in Washington, "Insular as Texas has a problem with Mexican-American voters—and I want to emphasize that its problems are minimal—Texas stands ready to do something about them."

The state has not always been so anxious to guarantee Mexican Americans voting rights. Fifty years ago Mexican Americans in South Texas toiled under a "patron" system that was essentially feudal. The ranch boss would tell his laborers and their families how to vote, perhaps give them a couple of dollars, and that was that. Most of the "patrons" are dead now, but there are still a few vestiges of the old system. Ernesto Ghobashoon of Alice, Texas, said that last year when she ran an unsuccessful race for state representative, she was asked by a Chihuahua resident of Duval County, "How much do you pay for a vote?" Secretary of State White shrugged his shoulder upon hearing this story and said, "I think we're seeing the fruits of that."

Still, according to a recent study by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, there is a pattern of voting abuses in Governor Briscoe's home county of Uvalde that is reminiscent of the Deep South in the early 1960's. A commission staff study charged that duly registered Chihuahua voters were not placed on the voting lists; that election judges were selectively and deliberately invalidating ballots cast by minority voters; that the Uvalde County Tax Assessor Collector refused to name members of minority groups as deputy registrars and allegedly "ran out" of the registration application cards when minority voter applicants asked for them. The commission investigators also reported that Mexican Americans in Uvalde County "fear loss of jobs or chances of promotion if they buck the Anglo establishment."

Kaye Northcutt is the editor of The Texas Observer.
VOTING RIGHTS ACT WINS TWO ROUNDS

House Turns Back Attempts to Weaken Legislation to Extend Law 10 Years

WASHINGTON, June 3—The House defeated today by wide margins several attempts to weaken legislation to renew the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the bill to extend it for 10 years appeared headed for approval tomorrow.

By margins of more than 2 to 1, the House rejected key amendments to make it easier for states already covered by the 10-year-old act to "bail out" of its requirements.

The Voting Rights Act, originally passed to give voting privileges to blacks long denied the franchise in seven states of the Old Confederacy, was renewed for five years in 1970.

Due to expire in August of this year, the act would be extended for 10 additional years under provisions of the pending legislation.

And in an important proposed expansion of the law, citizens of Spanish heritage and other "language minorities" would have their voting rights protected, along with blacks.

Under the law, states and localities now under surveillance by the Attorney General of the United States would remain covered unless they are able to obtain a judgment from the District Court in the District of Columbia.

Changes Must Be Cleared

The covered states are required to clear any changes in their election laws, such as redistricting or changes in voting places. And such devices as literacy tests, once used to disqualify blacks from registration, are banned. The present legislation would ban literacy tests permanently.

The House defeated, 269 to 134, an amendment by Representative Charles E. Wiggins, Republican of California, to give covered states a chance to have their status changed after each congressional election provided there was adequate participation by minority voters.

And by a vote of 279 to 133, the House turned aside an amendment by Representative M. Caldwell Butler, Republican of Virginia, which would have excepted covered states—such as Virginia—if 60 per cent of the minority vote turned out in a presidential election, if the state remained unthreatened by complaints of discrimination for five years, and if the state started an "affirmative action" plan to increase minority voter participation.

Resistance Expected

A number of additional amendments will come before the House, but most supporters of the legislation as it stands now were optimistic.

Civil rights supporters, despite the encouraging margins so far, still fear that some resistance to expanding the law's protection to other minorities may cause complications.

Among the jurisdictions that would be added to Federal coverage by language guarantees, would be Texas and sections of California, Colorado and some other states.

"Outside of the State of Texas, I find no evidence in the record to show a need for protection for other minorities," said Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois.

But Representative Herman Badillo, Democrat the Bronx, who is one of the leaders of the movement to extend voter protection to Spanish speaking Americans, said:

"We want to show that the spirit of the 1960s still exists, and for everybody."
House Votes, 341 to 70, to Extend and Broaden Voting Rights Act

By ERNEST HOLSENDOLPH Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 4—The House voted overwhelmingly today to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for 10 years and broaden its protection to include Spanish-speaking citizens and other "language minorities." The vote was 341 to 70.

The action came late today, and was as nearly anticlimactic as after early attempts to amend the bill were turned back by surprisingly large margins. The debate lasted three days, including two full days of attempts to add amendments by members who tried to remove some states from the bill's jurisdiction or prohibit the bill from being extended to include other minorities besides blacks.

The act was extended for five years in 1970. The original purpose was to guarantee the right to register and vote to blacks in seven Southern states, most of North Carolina and parts of several other states.

The act was extended for five years in 1970. The original purpose was to guarantee the right to register and vote to blacks in seven Southern states, most of North Carolina and parts of several other states.

The Senate version of the act to extend and expand the voting rights measure is still in limbo on the basis of concern among a number of non-English-speaking minorities in specific localities.

The House voted to extend the act with provisions to allow private citizens to bring their local jurisdictions under the law's provisions, and provide for government payment of the citizen's attorney fees if he prevails.

Provision of bilingual ballots for Spanish-speaking, Asian, Indian or Eskimo citizens—and even assistance when no written language is all right to protect blacks, Spanish-speaking people and others, but he asked, "What about the Greeks? The Athenians?"

And Representative Stephen J. Solarz, Democrat of Brooklyn, wanted bilingual ballots for Yiddish people in his district.

"I would be surprised if the level of illiteracy in Mr. Solarz's district was such to warrant this measure," said Representative Herman Badillo, Democrat of the Bronx, who was one of the bill's sponsors, "and I would be even more surprised if this were so and Mr. Solarz did not report this to the committee."

The House roundly defeated a motion by Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois, who argued against including non-English-speaking minorities on the ground that it would encourage "multilingualism" in the nation.

Quoting Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. McClory said, "In America, there is only one language—English."
Eastland Agrees to Move On the Voting Rights Act

WASHINGTON, July 16 (UPI) — James O. Eastland, Democrat of Mississippi, who is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, agreed today to act on House-passed legislation to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Senator Eastland, who has been in the hospital because of broken ribs suffered in a fall, called a meeting for tomorrow after a warning by Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, that there was a “serious possibility” that the act would expire if the Senate did not act quickly.

He named Senator Philip A. Hart, Democrat of Michigan, to act as chairman when the committee takes up the legislation approved by Senator Tunney’s Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights.

Senator Tunney said yesterday that the situation could become “an absolute nightmare” if the Senate’s Democratic leadership did not move to bring the legislation to a vote before key provisions of the law expired next month.
Senators Defeat Attempts To Dilute Vote Rights Bill

By ERNEST HOLSENDOLPH Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 17—The Senate Judiciary Committee turned aside attempts today to amend and weaken a bill to extend the Voting Rights Act for 10 years and appeared ready to approve the measure tomorrow.

The bill to continue protection of the voting rights of blacks and to extend the same protection to citizens of Spanish origin is expected to go to the Senate floor no later than next Thursday.

Supporters of the measure are concerned, however, because the present act will lapse on Aug. 6 unless the Senate acts in time. The House has already approved the bill.

So far only four members of the 16-member committee have come out against the act or in favor of substantial amendment. They are Senators Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, Roman L. Hruska of Nebraska and William L. Scott of Virginia, Republicans, and John L. McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas.

Along the amendments killed by the committee today were one by Senator Scott to reduce the number of states covered by the bill, including Virginia, one by Senator Thurmond that would have exempted South Carolina and one by Senator Hruska to extend the bill for five years instead of 10.

With feelings running high, Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, whose subcommittee cleared the bill for committee action, clashed with Senator Scott over the time to be given the opponents to prepare a minority report.

Convinced that every day counts, with the Aug. 6 deadline approaching, Senator Tunney wanted to put a Monday date on the report, but Senators Scott and Thurmond insisted on Wednesday.

"I'm trying to be fair about this," Senator Tunney said, flushed with anger. "We could have the House bill called up on the floor at any time. We don't have to wait."

"Do it! Do it! And see what happens," Senator Thurmond shouted.

He and Senator Scott said that the leadership might face tactics that would delay the vote, even in the face of the majority and the fact that the Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, and Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the minority leader, have pledged to bring a bill to vote.

The committee agreed to take its own vote tomorrow.
SENATE MODIFIES VOTING ACT PLAN

Backs a 7-Year Extension After Rejecting Ford Plea to Cover All States

By RICHARD L. MADDEN Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, July 23—The Senate voted tonight for an amendment that would extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for seven years instead of the 10-year extension already approved by the House of Representatives.

A vote on the bill itself is expected later this week.

The amendment to shorten the extension was proposed by Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic whip, and was passed, 52 to 42. The action could-cause the measure to be sent to a Senate-House conference and delay its final approval.

In an earlier action, the Senate rejected a Southern-led effort aimed at carrying out a surprise request from President Ford to expand the coverage of the law to all states.

By a vote of 38 to 38, the Senate tabled, or killed, a proposal by Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, that he said would carry out the President’s request. Several liberal Senators charged, however, that the proposal would “gut” the landmark 1965 law that has facilitated the registration of thousands of black voters in the South.

Earlier today, the Senate voted, 76 to 20, or 16 more than the required 60 votes, to limit debate on the pending bill, which would extend and expand the voting rights measure.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4 above—Aug. 6 unless Congress extends it.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, charged that the President’s request “in the final hours” of Senate consideration “does a great deal to confuse” the position of Mr. Ford and Administration officials, who up to now had supported mainly a five-year extension.

Senator John V. Tunney, the California Democrat who is floor manager of the bill, accused the President of “playing politics” with the bill. With Mr. Ford running for election next year, such a request to make the law effective nationwide could have appeal in Southern states, whose officials have contended that Northern states should be subjected to similar supervision.

Ford Motive Unknown

It could not be immediately determined why the President made the request at this time with Senate consideration of the bill nearing an end.

The Ford letter, which was also sent to some Republican Senators, asked that the President’s views be conveyed to the Senate. Mr. Mansfield said he had received the letter yesterday morning and “said on my own” in reading it this afternoon.

Mr. Stennis immediately offered his amendment, which he said would extend the 1965 law to all states and carry out the President’s request.

But Mr. Tunney and other supporters of the bill, such as Jacob K. Javits of New York and Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts, both Republicans, charged that the amendment would allow the bill by striking out the existing formula that determines when states come under terms of the law.

They also charged that the Justice Department would have to approve any changes in election laws or district lines in every election district in the nation. Such approval is now required of states and localities covered by the existing law.

Large vote to invoke cloture—limiting each Senator to one hour of debate—indicated that the Senate would pass an extension of the act before this weekend. It was not clear, however, whether the Senate would reject all amendments to the bill and thus avoid sending the measure to a House-Senate conference.

However, adoption of the proposal by Mr. Byrd to shorten the extension to seven years could complicate final approval of the bill once the Senate completes work on it.

Mr. Byrd argued that the voting rights measure had been extended in 1970 for only five years and that a seven-year extension would assure that the law’s coverage would remain in effect through the 1980 census and the subsequent reapportionment of Congressional and state legislative districts.

It was not immediately clear whether the House would accept the Byrd amendment or send the measure to a conference committee. The Senate floor managers of the bill had appealed to the Senate to reject all amendments so that the Senate could pass the bill as written by the House and let the bill go directly to the White House before Congress began its recess starting Aug. 1 and before the 1985 law expired.

The House bill would extend the law for 10 years and broaden its protection to include Spanish-speaking citizens and other “language minorities.”

In addition to continuing black voting rights in the six Southern states and parts of other states, including Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx, in New York City, the pending bill would add Texas, because of its large number of Spanish-speaking Americans; Alaska, because of its large Eskimo and Indian population; and parts of California and Colorado. The law permits Federal registration and election examiners to go into the areas that are covered.

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Senators Vote to Extend Voting Rights Act 7 Years

By RICHARD L. MADDEN Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 24—The Senate approved a bill extending the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for seven years and broadening the protection to include Spanish-speaking citizens and other "language minorities." The action ended six days of sometimes bitter procedural squabbling and delaying tactics by opponents of the measure, mainly Southerners, who accused the bill's supporters of using "stalemate" tactics to get it approved.

The vote was 77 to 12.

The measure now goes to the House of Representatives, which can accept two changes written in by the Senate, or send the bill to a Senate-House conference.

The main difference between the Senate version and the measure passed June 4 by the House is that the Senate bill would extend the law for seven years, while the House provided for a 10-year extension.

In a letter to key Senators tonight, Representative Peter F. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said that he would request the House Rules Committee to send the bill to the Senate changes to the House floor so that the measure could be accepted by the full House and sent to President Ford for his expected signature without a time-consuming Senate-House conference.

On a voice vote tonight, the Senate also wrote in an apparently minor second amendment that could enable Alaska to be freed from the requirement that it provide bilingual voting materials to Alaskan natives.

Congressional supporters are striving to complete action on the bill before Congress begins its month-long recess Aug. 1, and before the existing Voting Rights Act, which has facilitated the registration of thousands of black voters in the South, expires Aug. 6.

In a 15-hour day, the Senate turned back repeated efforts, mainly by Southern Senators, to make more changes in the bill. Earlier today, Mr. Rodino indicated that he would go along reluctantly with the Senate provisions for a seven-year extension.

**New York Covered**

Mr. Rodino said he still preferred a 10-year extension so that the law's protections of minorities against discrimination would extend until after states adopt new Congressional and legislative redistricting plans following the 1980 census.

But he said that the seven-year extension "wouldn't be that defective" and that he expected to ask the House to agree to it so that the bill could go directly to President Ford for his expected signature without a Senate-House conference.

Senate supporters are concerned that a possible time-consuming conference and new delaying tactics by opponents would jeopardize final approval of the measure before the recess and the law's expiration date.

The law, which was extended for five years in 1970, was originally aimed at guaranteeing blacks in seven Southern states the right to register and vote. Areas covered by the law are required to get Justice Department approval of changes in local voting laws and the department can send registrars and poll watchers into the states and localities covered.

The new version would continue safeguards for black voting rights in six states of the Deep South, most of North Carolina and parts of several other states that are now covered, including, for example, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.

The new law also provides for bilingual ballots for Spanish-speaking voters in Texas and for other states, and oral assistance if no written language is provided to voters.

In a series of votes today, the Senate tabled or killed amendments by Senators Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and William L. Scott of Virginia, both Republicans, that would have altered the existing formula that determines when states or localities are covered by the law. The effect of their proposals would have been to exempt some Southern states from the law's coverage.

On a vote of 87 to 38, the Senate also defeated an amendment by Mr. Scott that would have allowed Federal district courts in the affected states, rather than the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia, to adjudicate disputes over the advance approval by the Justice Department of changes in state and local voting laws. Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California and floor manager of the bill, suggested that judges in the affected localities might find it difficult to render "unbiased decisions" on voting law changes sought by the localities in which they lived.
Toward The Bilingual Election

By R. W. Apple Jr.

WASHINGTON — The 1971 census recorded that there were more than 6 million persons of Hispanic heritage in the United States, almost 800,000 American Indians, more than a million Asian-Americans and 50,000 Alaskan natives. None of these groups participated as fully in the political process as the white, European stock majority — a situation that the new Voting Rights Act, now moving toward final passage, seeks to remedy.

The linguistic minorities are concentrated in a relatively few areas of the country. Asian-Americans, for example, tend to live in Hawaii or on the West Coast. Mexican-Americans are found mainly in the southwest, Cubans in Florida and Puerto Ricans in New York. Because of this clustering, the potential impact of these minorities on local elections is substantial.

But as it is, they exert relatively little weight. Taking the Hispanic group as an example, because the data on it are by far the most complete, only 44.4 percent were registered for the 1972 presidential election compared with 73.4 for those of European origin. Hispanic registration also lags behind black voter registration nationally.

Similarly, members of the linguistic minorities hold relatively few public offices.

The reasons, of course, are complex. In general political participation closely parallels education, and members of the linguistic minorities are poorly educated (with the exception of Japanese-Americans, whose literacy rate exceeds the national average). Of all the Hispanic citizens over 25 years old, one in five has not completed the fifth grade.

But, according to testimony before committees in both houses of Congress, official indifference and overt discrimination have also played a part. Many states make no provision for bilingual voting material, and those that do furnish it only on a haphazard basis. In addition, economic and political pressures have been brought to bear on linguistic minority members either not to vote or to vote according to instructions.

Such devices as gerrymandering and multiple-member districts have also diluted their voting strength. For instance, by combining seven districts, two of which would ordinarily elect a minority representative, it is possible to produce seven at-large electors, all of which will usually be won by members of the majority. A city in which the minority is about to swell into a majority can annex new territory from the suburbs; San Antonio tacked on additional white neighborhoods in 1972 for precisely that reason.

The new law would require bilingual — and in some cases multilingual — voting procedures in all or part of 28 states. California, for example, must provide either oral or written election guidance in Spanish, Indian languages and Chinese. In addition, in Texas and Alaska, as well as 32 counties in 11 other states, all proposed changes in voting laws and boundaries would have to be submitted to the United States Attorney General for approval.

In these 13 states, the greatest political impact can be expected. The new law will probably produce, especially after the 1980 census, when electoral lines will be redrawn, more linguistic-minority officeholders, such as school board members, mayors and state legislators. And, because most members of these groups look to Washington for help, they can be expected to add votes to liberal, activist, mostly Democratic candidates in Congressional and Presidential elections.

Ford Hails Gain In Voting Rights

By Cynthia Gorney
Washington Post Staff Writer

On the 10th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, President Ford signed a bill yesterday that extends the act for seven years, expands its coverage to non-English speaking citizens and makes permanent its ban on voter literacy tests.

Mr. Ford signed the extension in a Rose Garden ceremony attended by many of the civil rights leaders who fought for the Voting Rights Act 10 years ago.

"The right to vote is at the very foundation of our American system," Mr. Ford said. "There must be no question whatsoever about the right of each eligible American to participate in our electoral process."

The Voting Rights Act, which has often been called the nation's most effective piece of civil rights legislation, has prohibited the use of literacy or other qualifying tests in voter registration. It gave the Justice Department the power to supervise elections in any state that used such tests and that showed registration of fewer than 50 per cent of its voting-age residents during the 1964 presidential election.

The new amendment to the act extends the Justice Department's special super-

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victory powers until August, 1982, and permanently bans voter qualifying tests.

In addition, it extends protection to members of what the act calls "language minorities"—American Indians, Alaskan natives, Asian-Americans, and Spanish speaking citizens—by allowing the Justice Department to oversee elections in states where any race minority makes up more than 5 per cent of the population and fewer than 10 per cent of potential voters are registered.

These states will be open to federal supervision even if they do not use voter qualifying tests, thus involving the government for the first time in states such as Texas, where only 103 per cent of eligible Spanish-speaking residents voted in the 1972 presidential election.

And for the next 10 years, no state with a language minority of 5 per cent or more will be permitted to conduct English-only elections if the minority's literacy rate is greater than the national average.

Fernando E. C. DeBaun, special assistant to the President on Hispanic affairs, called the expanded act a "historic document which signals a major breakthrough for the nation's 13 million Spanish-speaking Americans." He said he was optimistic about the effect the new provisions would have on states with large Spanish-speaking populations that had previously not been included under the act.

The Voting Rights Act was passed shortly after the historic 1965 Alabama march to Montgomery, Ala., to protest voting discrimination. Seventy-one blacks held office in the 11 Southern states that year; and in Selma, where the march began, 21 per cent of voting-age blacks were registered.

This year, there were 1,547 blacks in office in the South, including 1,714 in the seven states that were covered by the act. The 1970 black voting-age enrollment figure for Selma was 30 per cent.

Despite the act's documented effectiveness in increasing black voter registration, Congress spent several months this spring arguing about the proposed extension. Several amendments that civil rights supporters said would seriously weaken the bill were eventually defeated.

Among the proposed amendments were attempts to exempt states that had used voter qualifying tests in 1981 but could now show that more than 50 per cent of eligible blacks had voted since then, and a proposal to repeal the new language-minority provisions of the act.

During the congressional debate, Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington bureau of the NAACP, also expressed concern that the inclusion of language-minority states might open the Voting Rights Act to new and possibly dangerous constitutional tests.

He repeated those fears yesterday, saying, "We think it's entirely possible that someone will try to challenge it." But he said he is confident that a constitutional test of the language provisions would not weaken the rest of the act, and during the ceremony publicly thanked the President for his support.

"The nation owes you a great debt of gratitude, as well as members of the committee, Democrats and Republicans," said Mitchell, who has worked with the NAACP since 1946.

President Ford chats with Boy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, at Voting Rights Act signing.
Bilingual Elections Due in 464 Counties Under Voting Act

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27 (UPI) — The Justice Department said today that preliminary census figures showed that 464 counties in 27 states must conduct bilingual elections this fall, because of recent amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Assistant Attorney General Stanley Pottinger, in charge of the Civil Rights Division, told a news conference that he was mailing notices to officials of the jurisdictions, mostly counties, that they may be affected.

The Census Bureau will publish an official list later. Mr. Pottinger's staff is preparing guidelines.

Amendments signed into law on Aug. 6 extended coverage of the act by including under certain conditions all jurisdictions having non-English speaking minorities of 5 per cent or more of the voting age population.

If a jurisdiction is covered, it must make all election announcements and voting instructions available in the "minority language" as well as in English.

Mr. Pottinger noted that some jurisdictions may have difficulty complying. For example, San Francisco has English, Spanish and Chinese residents. Other areas have American-Indian dialects.

The 1975 amendments, which do not become effective officially until the Census Bureau publishes its list of covered jurisdictions, is expected to cover all 273 counties in Texas.

Other states believed to be affected are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.
Oklahoma Official Chafes at Law On Bilingual Ballots for Indians

OKLAHOMA CITY, Aug. 30 — Recent amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, requiring bilingual ballots for American Indians, are posing problems for state election officials here.

"The law is completely worthless as far as we are concerned," said Lee Slater, secretary of the state Election Board. "Of the more than 40 tribes, only the Cherokees have their own alphabet; the others speak a phonetic language. So how do you go about preparing a ballot?"

Earlier this week, the Justice Department began notifying 464 counties in 27 states—including Oklahoma—that, beginning this fall, they would have to protect the voting rights of non-English-speaking minority groups by making election announcements and voting instructions available in the "minority language" as well as in English.

All Future Elections

This requirement, called for by amendments to the Voting Rights Act signed into law by President Ford on Aug. 6, applies to all future voting, from Presidential elections to local bond issues, in the affected counties.

As defined by the Voting Rights Act, the minority groups entitled to this language assistance are American Indians, Asian-American, Alaskan natives and Hispanics.

Mr. Slater said the Justice Department "has us playing a game of poker without a set of rules," and added:

"Two counties in which we have Spanish-speaking minorities will be no problem. But in the other counties, the situation is absurd and an insult to the Indians."

Mr. Slater said he had heard many complaints about voting irregularities and discrimination during his eight years in office, but had never heard an Indian complain that he could not read a ballot.

Who Is an Indian?

The election secretary, who must enforce the new law, is also faced with another problem: "We don't know who is an Indian and who is not," he said. "Because of another Federal law, we are prohibited from listing voters by race or ethnic origin."

Mr. Slater said he would seek assistance from the Census Bureau. "We want them to tell us who is an Indian and to which tribe each Indian belongs," he said.

Once he has that information, the election official added, he will begin worrying about preparing ballots in more than 40 different tribal languages.