Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0650-2015	**Version:** *	**Name:**	Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 (H.R. 885)	
Type:	Resolution		**Status:**	Filed (End of Session)	
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On agenda:	4/16/2015				
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Title: Resolution in support of the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 (H.R. 885), which restores and modernizes portions of the Voting Rights Act invalidated by the Supreme Court decision Shelby County v. Holder.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments: 1. April 16, 2015 - Stated Meeting Agenda with Links to Files

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/16/2015	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
4/16/2015	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2017	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 650

Resolution in support of the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 (H.R. 885), which restores and modernizes portions of the Voting Rights Act invalidated by the Supreme Court decision Shelby County v. Holder.

By Council Members Mealy, Chin, Constantinides, Crowley, Cumbo, Johnson, King, Palma, Rosenthal, Mendez, Miller, Menchaca, Lancman, Lander, Richards, Williams, Mealy, Dromm, Torres, Cornegy, Espinal and Rose

Whereas, The right to vote is the foundation of democracy; and

Whereas, One of the most significant legislative achievements of the civil rights movement was the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), which protected Americans against racial or ethnic discrimination in voting; and

Whereas, The VRA's impact was immediately seen in the African American voter registration rate in states covered by the VRA, which increased from 29.3% to 52.1% between 1965 and 1967, according to the Cambridge University Press study, "Minority Representation and the Quest for Voting Equality;" and

Whereas, According to the same study, the number of African American state legislators also saw a

dramatic increase in the eleven former Confederate states, from three to 176 between 1965 and 1985; and

Whereas, The VRA was reauthorized four times between 1970 and 2006 with large bipartisan support, including a unanimous Senate vote in 2006; and

Whereas, While substantial progress has been made in the last 50 years to reduce voter discrimination, significant challenges remain today; and

Whereas, Between 2000 and 2013, 148 separate violations of the VRA were documented nationwide, including eight in New York State, with some instances impacting hundreds of thousands of voters, according to a report by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; and

Whereas, In June of 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated important portions of the VRA in the decision Shelby County v. Holder, striking down as unconstitutional the section that determines which jurisdictions require preclearance from the U.S. Department of Justice to enact changes to voting procedures; and

Whereas, U.S. Representative Sensenbrenner responded to the Shelby decision by introducing the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 (VRAA), aiming to revise the criteria determining preclearance coverage and to offer additional measures to prevent and address voter discrimination; and

Whereas, The VRAA has several key features, including updating the preclearance formula to cover jurisdictions with a recent pattern of discrimination; and

Whereas, The legislation expands the federal court's ability to apply a preclearance remedy when it finds a violation of discriminatory result, where previously a finding of discriminatory intent was necessary; and

Whereas, It requires public notification of certain voting process changes and extends this requirement nationwide, beyond only the jurisdictions needing preclearance, to provide greater transparency for potentially discriminatory changes; and

Whereas, The VRAA also provides concrete, well-defined tools to prevent discrimination, including

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empowering the public and the Department of Justice to commence court actions to temporarily halt a potentially discriminatory voting change; and

Whereas, In addition, the legislation clarifies that the U.S. Attorney General retains the power to send federal observers to monitor elections in jurisdictions with preclearance obligations; and

Whereas, These measures are significant steps in preserving and protecting all Americans' fundamental right to participate in our democracy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for Congressional support for the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 (H.R. 885), which restores and modernizes portions of the Voting Rights Act invalidated by the Supreme Court decision Shelby County v. Holder.

LS #3996
LW
3/23/2015