from voting even after they have finished their sentences. Once these people have returned to society, become good mothers and fathers, have jobs and are taxpayers, why should they not be allowed to vote? And because of the disproportionate impact of racism in this country, blacks and Latinos bear a disproportionate share of the burden of the loss of the right to vote. If Canada and other countries can take affirmative action to register former prisoners and bring them into full citizenship, then so can America. That's why I have cosponsored and plan to sponsor legislation having this effect on the federal level.

I strongly support creation of black-majority legislative districts. In a winner-take-all system in which 50.1 percent of voters can win 100 percent of power, they often are the only vehicle for people of color winning representation. But why should we accept these winner-take-all electoral rules that by definition deny representation to any political grouping that is in a minority in an area? What makes Republicans living in a majority-Republican district any more deserving of a chance to elect someone than Republicans living in a majority-Democratic district? Why should the black voters who were so happy to help elect me in my original congressional district no longer have that chance just because the courts ordered my district changed? How can some downplay the role of race in voting in America even as no blacks or Latinos serve in the U.S. Senate—and no State has a black or Latino majority?

I work hard to represent everyone in my district, but I have no illusions; a large number of my constituents would prefer another Representative. And as the only Congresswoman from Georgia and the only black woman Representative from the deep South States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, I feel an obligation to speak for many people outside my district. Different voting systems would allow elections to be based on this reality, rather than the fallacy that Members speak only for the people in their districts.

Our entire electoral system should be reformed to make our institutions more reflective of America's voters. That's why I have authored in each of the past three Congresses the Voters Choice Act which allows the States to adopt proportional voting systems. Of the world's 36 major, full-fledged democracies, 33 use forms of proportional representation for national elections. Proportional systems also have a history in the United States. For example, then-governor George W. Bush signed legislation in Texas that has contributed to more than 50 localities moving to proportional systems in Texas. In May 2000, Amarillo used cumulative voting for the first time to elect its school board. It resulted in victories by the first black candidate ever to win a seat, the first Latino candidate to win since the 1970s, a tripling of voter turnout and widespread acceptance of the new rules. It is proportional representation in the Republic of South Africa that allows the Afrikaaner parties to have representative in the South African Parliament despite majority rule.

The principle of proportional voting is simple: That like-minded voters should be able to win seats in proportion to their share of the vote without hurting the rights of others—which is to say that 20 percent of like-minded voters in Peoria call fill one of five city council seats with its cumulative voting system, and 51 percent will elect a majority of three seats. It mechanisms range from party-based systems, which allow small parties to win seats, to candidate-based systems that would simply widen the ''bid tent'' of the major parties. Either way, its impact would be powerful in reinvigorating American politics, encouraging more cooperative policy-making and giving voters a greater range of choice.

Campaign finance reform must become more than a slogan, but law if we are to really give voters a choice in candidates. Right now, the special interests select the candidates before we even get to vote, so our choices as voters are severely limited due to the influence of special interest political money. I have benefited from current laws, as my incumbency helped me raise enough money to have the chance to reach new voters and hold onto my seat in Congress even after it was converted into a white-majority district. But that doesn't stop me from wanting to establish a political playing field in which all Americans have a chance to play, not just those with money or rich friends.

America is increasingly becoming a country of people of color. We know that southern resistance to minority gains of the Civil Rights Era never ended. But as America becomes a country of color we have seen southern resistance spread across our land. We must remain vigilant. Any policy that has the effect of suppressing or diluting the votes of people of color is not sustainable and violates the Voting Rights Act. We have severe problems facing us today. A black boy born in Harlem has less chance of reaching age 65 than a boy born in Bangladesh. Twenty-six black men were executed last year. And too many black men have been relegated to the streets, underpasses, and heating grates of America's urban cities. It is only through the vote that we will be able to change the conditions in our community and to right the multitudinous wrongs that have been foisted upon our condition. We have the power to change the status quo and our opponents know that well. That is why the practice of minority voter suppression is alive and well. However, until now, we didn't realize the power that we have. The Emperor is naked now. And as a result, the devious acts of minority vote suppression have been laid bare for the world to see. We have seen them too. I predict that the black electorate will never be the same. Just like white America, we now know that our votes count and as a result we will demand that our votes be counted.

HONORING CAROLYN GOLDEN FOR HER PORTRAITS OF SUCCESS AWARD

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carolyn Golden for receiving the Portraits of Success Award. This award pays tribute to Ms. Golden's involvement in the African-American community. Her active involvement has made her a role model for the members of her local community.

Carolyn graduated from Fresno University in 1973. In 1974, she began work as a Deputy Probation Officer. From 1978 to 1991 she served as a Campus Probation Officer, a Placement Officer, and a Superior Court Investigator. In 1991, Carolyn became the Probation Services Manager for the Fresno County Probation Department. She also serves as the Project Coordinator of the Victim/Witness Program in Fresno County.

Her involvement with volunteer and professional organizations include: KVPT, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Black Catholic United, N.A.A.C.P., YWCA Marjoree Mason Center, Big Brother/Big Sister, Central Valley March of Dimes, African-American Museum San Joaquin Valley, Citizen's Advisory Committee for Pleasant Valley State Prison, Women's Criminal Justice Association, Black Peace Officer's Association, California Victim Witness Coordinating Council, AD HOC Committee Member, Domestic Violence Round Table, California Probation & Parole Correctional Association.

Her accomplishments have earned her a Portraits of Success Award, presented by KSEE–24 and Companies That Care in recognition of African-American History Month.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Carolyn Golden for her commitment to improving the lives of the people in the community. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Carolyn Golden many more years of continued success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT ACT

HON. JENNIFER DUNN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation, the Paul Coverdell Medical Research Investment Act.

Under the current tax code, deductible charitable cash gifts to support medical research are limited to 50% of an individual's adjusted gross income. This bill would simply increase the deductibility of cash gifts for medical research to 80% of an individual's adjusted gross income. For those individuals who are willing and able to give more than 80% of their income, the bill also extends the period an individual can carry the deduction forward for excess charitable gifts from five years to ten years.

In what is perhaps the most important change for today's economy, the bill allows taxpayers to donate stock without being penalized for it. Americans regularly donate stock acquired through a stock option plan to their favorite charity. And often they make the donation within a year of exercising their stock options. But current law penalizes these donations by taxing them as ordinary income or as capital gain. These taxes can run as high as 40%, which acts as a disincentive to contribute to charities. How absurd that someone who donates $1,000 to a charity has to sell $1,400 of stock to pay for it. The person could wait a year and give the stock then, but why delay the contribution when that money can be put to work curing disease today. The MRI Act is premised on a simple truth: People should not be penalized for helping others.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers, relying on IRS data and studies of charitable giving, conducted a study on the effects of the MRI Act.