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August 5, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC, 20500

Dear President Obama:

In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, we write to respectfully ask you to consider bestowing the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson. March 7, 2015 marked 50 years since 600 protesters arrived at the Edmund Pettus Bridge to march from Selma to Montgomery in pursuit of securing access to the voting booth for all Americans. Once across the bridge, the foot soldiers met violent state-sanctioned opposition from mounted Alabama state troopers. Often referred to as the "Matriarch of the Movement," Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson was third from the front as the daring foot soldiers led the famous march over the bridge. As she descended down the bridge with the other marchers, the troopers charged towards them with their weapons (guns, billy clubs, cattle prods and tear gas canisters) drawn. Among many who were injured, Mrs. Boynton Robinson was beaten unconscious. The horrific violence the unarmed activists encountered on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on "Bloody Sunday" helped draw national support for the Voting Rights Movement and paved the way for future generations to grow up in a more equal and just America.

Mrs. Boynton Robinson has personally witnessed the consequences of bigotry and racial injustice from being denied access to her voting rights as an American citizen. She understands the plight of the poor and the powerless. Born into an era where literacy tests were used as a tool to discriminate against minorities seeking the opportunity to vote, as a young woman she fought against voter discrimination by holding voter registration drives. As time progressed and the struggle continued, she opened up her home and office as a resource for Selma's ongoing civil rights initiatives and became the first female African-American to seek an Alabama Congressional seat.

Mrs. Boynton Robinson's leadership during the Civil Rights Movement and her commitment to freedom is deserving of the highest civilian honor our nation has to offer. Today, at the age of 103, Mrs. Boynton Robinson remains committed to fighting injustice and pursuing equality for all Americans, regardless of their race or gender, by traveling around the world to speak and encourage progressive reform.



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In closing, we hope that you will bestow the highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, to Ms. Amelia Boynton Robinson in recognition of her contributions to civil rights and voting rights for all Americans and her legacy within the fabric and history of our nation. We thank you for your continued leadership and your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



G. K. Butterfield
Chairman
The Congressional Black Caucus



Terri Sewell
Member of Congress
United States House of Representatives