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CONGRESSMAN CONYERS ENDORSES BONIFAZ FOR MASSACHUSETTS SECRETARY OF STATE

BOSTON, MA – Congressman John Conyers, Jr., the second most senior member in the United States House of Representatives, announced his endorsement today of voting rights leader John Bonifaz for Massachusetts Secretary of State.

"In the wake of Florida 2000 and Ohio 2004, it is more important than ever that we have a Secretary of State like John Bonifaz who will fight for our democracy," said Conyers (D-MI), the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee and the dean of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Congressman Conyers and Bonifaz have worked closely together in fighting to protect the integrity of the electoral process, and in challenging the Bush administration on its illegal war in Iraq. In December 2004, Bonifaz, the founder of the National Voting Rights Institute, joined Conyers for hearings the congressman held in Columbus, Ohio, and in Washington, D.C., on the irregularities of the 2004 election in Ohio. Bonifaz led the fight in the courts for a full recount of the 2004 presidential vote in Ohio. The recount fight contributed important evidence to the report Conyers issued, "Preserving Democracy: What Went Wrong in Ohio," which led to the historic challenge in the US Congress in January 2005 to the counting of Ohio's Electoral College votes.

In February 2003, Bonifaz served as lead counsel for Conyers and other Members of Congress, along with US soldiers and parents of US soldiers, in a federal lawsuit in Boston challenging President George W. Bush's authority to launch a first-strike invasion of Iraq absent a congressional declaration of war or equivalent action. In June 2005, Bonifaz joined Conyers again as a key witness testifying on the Downing Street Minutes in hearings the congressman held in the basement of the US Capitol. The Downing Street Minutes, first reported by the London Sunday Times, revealed that the Bush Administration had decided, as of July 2002, to invade Iraq and that the "intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

"John Bonifaz has been a remarkable asset to me and to the nationwide movement to hold the Bush Administration accountable for its abuses of power," Conyers said in his announcement today. "Massachusetts deserves a strong, proven leader like John Bonifaz. Our country needs to elect more principled progressive candidates like John Bonifaz."

"I am deeply honored to receive this endorsement today from Congressman Conyers," said Bonifaz. "Congressman Conyers is an extraordinary human being with a long history of standing up for what is right. He believes, as I do, that we must fight to return voters to power and to uphold the basic promises of our democracy. I am proud to stand with him."

To read the full text of the Conyers endorsement, visit http://www.conyersblog.us/archives/00000413.htm.

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