

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2010

AN ACT

To protect the voting rights of members of the Armed Services in elections for the Delegate representing American Samoa in the United States House of Representatives, and for other purposes.

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To protect the voting rights of members of the Armed Services in elections for the Delegate representing American Samoa in the United States House of Representatives, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) It is in the national interest that qualifying
4 members of the Armed Forces on active duty and
5 other overseas voters be allowed to vote in Federal
6 elections.

7 (2) Since 1980, when the first election for the
8 Congressional Delegate from American Samoa was
9 held, general elections have been held in the first
10 week of November in even-numbered years and run-
11 off elections have been held 2 weeks later.

12 (3) This practice of holding a run-off election 2
13 weeks after a general election deprives members of
14 the Armed Forces on active duty and other overseas
15 voters of the opportunity to participate in the Fed-
16 eral election process in American Samoa.

17 (4) Prior to and since September 11, 2001, and
18 due to limited air service, mail delays, and other
19 considerations, it has been and remains impossible
20 for absentee ballots to be prepared and returned
21 within a 2-week period.

22 (5) American Samoa law requiring members of
23 the Armed Forces on active duty and other overseas
24 voters to register in person also prevents participa-
25 tion in the Federal election process and is contrary

1 to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee
2 Voting Act.

3 (6) Given that 49 states elect their Representa-
4 tives to the United States House of Representatives
5 by plurality, it is in the national interest for Amer-
6 ican Samoa to do the same until such time as the
7 American Samoa Legislature establishes primary
8 elections and declares null and void the local practice
9 of requiring members of the Armed Forces on active
10 duty and other overseas voters to register in person
11 which is contrary to the federal Uniformed and
12 Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

13 **SEC. 2. PLURALITY OF VOTES REQUIRED FOR ELECTION**
14 **OF DELEGATE.**

15 Section 2 of the Act entitled “An Act to provide that
16 the Territory of American Samoa be represented by a non-
17 voting Delegate to the United States House of Represent-
18 atives, and for other purposes”, approved October 31,
19 1978 (48 U.S.C. 1732; Public Law 95–556) is amended—

20 (1) in subsection (a)—

21 (A) by striking “majority” and inserting
22 “plurality” the first place it appears; and

23 (B) by striking “If no candidate” and all
24 that follows through “office of Delegate.”; and

1 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
 2 sections:

3 “(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMARY ELECTIONS.—
 4 The legislature of American Samoa may, but is not re-
 5 quired to, provide for primary elections for the election
 6 of Delegate.

7 “(d) EFFECT OF ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMARY
 8 ELECTIONS.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), if the legis-
 9 lature of American Samoa provides for primary elections
 10 for the election of Delegate, the Delegate shall be elected
 11 by a majority of votes cast in any subsequent general elec-
 12 tion for the office of Delegate for which such primary elec-
 13 tions were held.”.

14 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES.**

15 The amendments made by paragraph (1) of section
 16 2 shall take effect on January 1, 2006. The amendment
 17 made by paragraph (2) of section 2 shall take effect on
 18 January 1, 2005.

Passed the House of Representatives June 14, 2004.

Attest:

Clerk.