

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 281

To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California (for herself, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. HOOLEY, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. McDERMOTT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Universal Right to
5 Vote by Mail Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) An inequity of voting rights exists in the
9 United States because voters in some States have

1 the universal right to vote by mail while voters in
2 other States do not.

3 (2) Many voters often have work, family, or
4 other commitments that make getting to polls on the
5 date of an election difficult or impossible.

6 (3) Allowing voters to vote by mail can lead to
7 increased voter participation.

8 (4) Voting by mail is more convenient for many
9 voters.

10 (5) Voting by mail gives voters more time to
11 consider their choices.

12 (6) Studies show that an overwhelming majority
13 of voters prefer voting by mail as an alternative to
14 going to the polls.

15 (7) No evidence exists suggesting the potential
16 for fraud in absentee balloting is greater than the
17 potential for fraud by any other method of voting.

18 (8) 28 States currently allow universal absentee
19 voting, which permits any voter to request a mail-
20 in ballot without providing a reason for the request.

21 **SEC. 3. PROMOTING ABILITY OF VOTERS TO VOTE BY MAIL**

22 **IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.**

23 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subtitle A of title III of the Help
24 America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15481 et seq.) is

1 amended by inserting after section 303 the following new
2 section:

3 **“SEC. 303A. PROMOTING ABILITY OF VOTERS TO VOTE BY**
4 **MAIL.**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—If an individual in a State is eli-
6 gible to cast a vote in an election for Federal office, the
7 State may not impose any additional conditions or require-
8 ments on the eligibility of the individual to cast the vote
9 in such election by mail, except to the extent that the
10 State imposes a deadline for requesting the ballot and re-
11 lated voting materials from the appropriate State or local
12 election official and for returning the ballot to the appro-
13 priate State or local election official.

14 “(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—A State shall be required
15 to comply with the requirements of subsection (a) with re-
16 spect to elections for Federal office held in years beginning
17 with 2008.”.

18 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT RELATING TO EN-
19 FORCEMENT.—Section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 15511)
20 is amended by striking “and 303” and inserting “303, and
21 303A”.

22 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
23 for such Act is amended by inserting after the item relat-
24 ing to section 303 the following new item:

“Sec. 303A. Promoting ability of voters to vote by mail.”.