

(2) Optional use by States

At the option of a State, the State may provide for the testing, certification, decertification, or recertification of its voting system hardware and software by the laboratories accredited by the Commission under this section.

(b) Laboratory accreditation**(1) Recommendations by National Institute of Standards and Technology**

Not later than 6 months after the Commission first adopts voluntary voting system guidelines under subpart 3 of part A of this subchapter, the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall conduct an evaluation of independent, non-Federal laboratories and shall submit to the Commission a list of those laboratories the Director proposes to be accredited to carry out the testing, certification, decertification, and recertification provided for under this section.

(2) Approval by Commission**(A) In general**

The Commission shall vote on the accreditation of any laboratory under this section, taking into consideration the list submitted under paragraph (1), and no laboratory may be accredited for purposes of this section unless its accreditation is approved by a vote of the Commission.

(B) Accreditation of laboratories not on Director list

The Commission shall publish an explanation for the accreditation of any laboratory not included on the list submitted by the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology under paragraph (1).

(c) Continuing review by National Institute of Standards and Technology**(1) In general**

In cooperation with the Commission and in consultation with the Standards Board and the Board of Advisors, the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall monitor and review, on an ongoing basis, the performance of the laboratories accredited by the Commission under this section, and shall make such recommendations to the Commission as it considers appropriate with respect to the continuing accreditation of such laboratories, including recommendations to revoke the accreditation of any such laboratory.

(2) Approval by Commission required for revocation

The accreditation of a laboratory for purposes of this section may not be revoked unless the revocation is approved by a vote of the Commission.

(d) Transition

Until such time as the Commission provides for the testing, certification, decertification, and recertification of voting system hardware and software by accredited laboratories under this section, the accreditation of laboratories

and the procedure for the testing, certification, decertification, and recertification of voting system hardware and software used as of October 29, 2002, shall remain in effect.

(Pub. L. 107-252, title II, § 231, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1684.)

Editorial Notes**CODIFICATION**

Section was formerly classified to section 15371 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

PART C—STUDIES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL ELECTIONS**§ 20981. Periodic studies of election administration issues****(a) In general**

On such periodic basis as the Commission may determine, the Commission shall conduct and make available to the public studies regarding the election administration issues described in subsection (b), with the goal of promoting methods of voting and administering elections which—

(1) will be the most convenient, accessible, and easy to use for voters, including members of the uniformed services and overseas voters, individuals with disabilities, including the blind and visually impaired, and voters with limited proficiency in the English language;

(2) will yield the most accurate, secure, and expeditious system for voting and tabulating election results;

(3) will be nondiscriminatory and afford each registered and eligible voter an equal opportunity to vote and to have that vote counted; and

(4) will be efficient and cost-effective for use.

(b) Election administration issues described

For purposes of subsection (a), the election administration issues described in this subsection are as follows:

(1) Methods and mechanisms of election technology and voting systems used in voting and counting votes in elections for Federal office, including the over-vote and under-vote notification capabilities of such technology and systems.

(2) Ballot designs for elections for Federal office.

(3) Methods of voter registration, maintaining secure and accurate lists of registered voters (including the establishment of a centralized, interactive, statewide voter registration list linked to relevant agencies and all polling sites), and ensuring that registered voters appear on the voter registration list at the appropriate polling site.

(4) Methods of conducting provisional voting.

(5) Methods of ensuring the accessibility of voting, registration, polling places, and voting equipment to all voters, including individuals with disabilities (including the blind and visually impaired), Native American or Alaska Native citizens, and voters with limited proficiency in the English language.

(6) Nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, deterring, and investigating voting fraud in elections for Federal office.

(7) Identifying, deterring, and investigating methods of voter intimidation.

(8) Methods of recruiting, training, and improving the performance of poll workers.

(9) Methods of educating voters about the process of registering to vote and voting, the operation of voting mechanisms, the location of polling places, and all other aspects of participating in elections.

(10) The feasibility and advisability of conducting elections for Federal office on different days, at different places, and during different hours, including the advisability of establishing a uniform poll closing time and establishing—

(A) a legal public holiday under section 6103 of title 5 as the date on which general elections for Federal office are held;

(B) the Tuesday next after the 1st Monday in November, in every even numbered year, as a legal public holiday under such section;

(C) a date other than the Tuesday next after the 1st Monday in November, in every even numbered year as the date on which general elections for Federal office are held; and

(D) any date described in subparagraph (C) as a legal public holiday under such section.

(11) Federal and State laws governing the eligibility of persons to vote.

(12) Ways that the Federal Government can best assist State and local authorities to improve the administration of elections for Federal office and what levels of funding would be necessary to provide such assistance.

(13)(A) The laws and procedures used by each State that govern—

(i) recounts of ballots cast in elections for Federal office;

(ii) contests of determinations regarding whether votes are counted in such elections; and

(iii) standards that define what will constitute a vote on each type of voting equipment used in the State to conduct elections for Federal office.

(B) The best practices (as identified by the Commission) that are used by States with respect to the recounts and contests described in clause (i).

(C) Whether or not there is a need for more consistency among State recount and contest procedures used with respect to elections for Federal office.

(14) The technical feasibility of providing voting materials in eight or more languages for voters who speak those languages and who have limited English proficiency.

(15) Matters particularly relevant to voting and administering elections in rural and urban areas.

(16) Methods of voter registration for members of the uniformed services and overseas voters, and methods of ensuring that such voters receive timely ballots that will be properly and expeditiously handled and counted.

(17) The best methods for establishing voting system performance benchmarks, expressed as

a percentage of residual vote in the Federal contest at the top of the ballot.

(18) Broadcasting practices that may result in the broadcast of false information concerning the location or time of operation of a polling place.

(19) Such other matters as the Commission determines are appropriate.

(c) Reports

The Commission shall submit to the President and to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on each study conducted under subsection (a) together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative action as the Commission determines is appropriate.

(Pub. L. 107-252, title II, § 241, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1686.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15381 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

ELECTION DATA COLLECTION GRANTS

Pub. L. 110-161, div. D, title V, § 501, Dec. 26, 2007, 121 Stat. 1997, required the Election Assistance Commission to establish an election data collection grant program.

§ 20982. Study, report, and recommendations on best practices for facilitating military and overseas voting

(a) Study

(1) In general

The Commission, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall conduct a study on the best practices for facilitating voting by absent uniformed services voters (as defined in section 20310(1) of this title) and overseas voters (as defined in section 20310(5) of this title).

(2) Issues considered

In conducting the study under paragraph (1) the Commission shall consider the following issues:

(A) The rights of residence of uniformed services voters absent due to military orders.

(B) The rights of absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to register to vote and cast absentee ballots, including the right of such voters to cast a secret ballot.

(C) The rights of absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to submit absentee ballot applications early during an election year.

(D) The appropriate preelection deadline for mailing absentee ballots to absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters.

(E) The appropriate minimum period between the mailing of absentee ballots to absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters and the deadline for receipt of such ballots.

(F) The timely transmission of balloting materials to absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters.

(G) Security and privacy concerns in the transmission, receipt, and processing of ballots from absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters, including the need to protect against fraud.

(H) The use of a single application by absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters for absentee ballots for all Federal elections occurring during a year.

(I) The use of a single application for voter registration and absentee ballots by absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters.

(J) The use of facsimile machines and electronic means of transmission of absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots to absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters.

(K) Other issues related to the rights of absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to participate in elections.

(b) Report and recommendations

Not later than the date that is 18 months after October 29, 2002, the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a)(1) together with recommendations identifying the best practices used with respect to the issues considered under subsection (a)(2).

(Pub. L. 107–252, title II, §242, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1688.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15382 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20983. Report on human factor research

Not later than 1 year after October 29, 2002, the Commission, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, shall submit a report to Congress which assesses the areas of human factor research, including usability engineering and human-computer and human-machine interaction, which feasibly could be applied to voting products and systems design to ensure the usability and accuracy of voting products and systems, including methods to improve access for individuals with disabilities (including blindness) and individuals with limited proficiency in the English language and to reduce voter error and the number of spoiled ballots in elections.

(Pub. L. 107–252, title II, §243, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1688.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15383 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20984. Study and report on voters who register by mail and use of Social Security information

(a) Registration by mail

(1) Study

(A) In general

The Commission shall conduct a study of the impact of section 21083(b) of this title on voters who register by mail.

(B) Specific issues studied

The study conducted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) an examination of the impact of section 21083(b) of this title on first time mail registrant voters who vote in person, including the impact of such section on voter registration;

(ii) an examination of the impact of such section on the accuracy of voter rolls, including preventing ineligible names from being placed on voter rolls and ensuring that all eligible names are placed on voter rolls; and

(iii) an analysis of the impact of such section on existing State practices, such as the use of signature verification or attestation procedures to verify the identity of voters in elections for Federal office, and an analysis of other changes that may be made to improve the voter registration process, such as verification or additional information on the registration card.

(2) Report

Not later than 18 months after the date on which section 21083(b)(2) of this title takes effect, the Commission shall submit a report to the President and Congress on the study conducted under paragraph (1)(A) together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative action as the Commission determines is appropriate.

(b) Use of Social Security information

Not later than 18 months after the date on which section 21083(a)(5) of this title takes effect, the Commission, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Security, shall study and report to Congress on the feasibility and advisability of using Social Security identification numbers or other information compiled by the Social Security Administration to establish voter registration or other election law eligibility or identification requirements, including the matching of relevant information specific to an individual voter, the impact of such use on national security issues, and whether adequate safeguards or waiver procedures exist to protect the privacy of an individual voter.

(Pub. L. 107–252, title II, §244, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1689.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

For the effective dates of subsecs. (a)(5) and (b)(2) of section 21083 of this title, referred to in subsecs. (a)(2) and (b), see section 21083(d) of this title.

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15384 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20985. Study and report on electronic voting and the electoral process

(a) Study

(1) In general

The Commission shall conduct a thorough study of issues and challenges, specifically to include the potential for election fraud, presented by incorporating communications and Internet technologies in the Federal, State, and local electoral process.

(2) Issues to be studied

The Commission may include in the study conducted under paragraph (1) an examination of—

(A) the appropriate security measures required and minimum standards for certification of systems or technologies in order to minimize the potential for fraud in voting or in the registration of qualified citizens to register and vote;

(B) the possible methods, such as Internet or other communications technologies, that may be utilized in the electoral process, including the use of those technologies to register voters and enable citizens to vote online, and recommendations concerning statutes and rules to be adopted in order to implement an online or Internet system in the electoral process;

(C) the impact that new communications or Internet technology systems for use in the electoral process could have on voter participation rates, voter education, public accessibility, potential external influences during the elections process, voter privacy and anonymity, and other issues related to the conduct and administration of elections;

(D) whether other aspects of the electoral process, such as public availability of candidate information and citizen communication with candidates, could benefit from the increased use of online or Internet technologies;

(E) the requirements for authorization of collection, storage, and processing of electronically generated and transmitted digital messages to permit any eligible person to register to vote or vote in an election, including applying for and casting an absentee ballot;

(F) the implementation cost of an online or Internet voting or voter registration system and the costs of elections after implementation (including a comparison of total cost savings for the administration of the electoral process by using Internet technologies or systems);

(G) identification of current and foreseeable online and Internet technologies for use in the registration of voters, for voting, or for the purpose of reducing election fraud, currently available or in use by election authorities;

(H) the means by which to ensure and achieve equity of access to online or Inter-

net voting or voter registration systems and address the fairness of such systems to all citizens; and

(I) the impact of technology on the speed, timeliness, and accuracy of vote counts in Federal, State, and local elections.

(b) Report

(1) Submission

Not later than 20 months after October 29, 2002, the Commission shall transmit to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on the results of the study conducted under subsection (a), including such legislative recommendations or model State laws as are required to address the findings of the Commission.

(2) Internet posting

In addition to the dissemination requirements under chapter 19 of title 44, the Election Administration Commission shall post the report transmitted under paragraph (1) on an Internet website.

(Pub. L. 107-252, title II, §245, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1690.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15385 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20986. Study and report on free absentee ballot postage

(a) Study on the establishment of a free absentee ballot postage program

(1) In general

The Commission, in consultation with the Postal Service, shall conduct a study on the feasibility and advisability of the establishment of a program under which the Postal Service shall waive or otherwise reduce the amount of postage applicable with respect to absentee ballots submitted by voters in general elections for Federal office (other than balloting materials mailed under section 3406 of title 39) that does not apply with respect to the postage required to send the absentee ballots to voters.

(2) Public survey

As part of the study conducted under paragraph (1), the Commission shall conduct a survey of potential beneficiaries under the program described in such paragraph, including the elderly and disabled, and shall take into account the results of such survey in determining the feasibility and advisability of establishing such a program.

(b) Report

(1) Submission

Not later than the date that is 1 year after October 29, 2002, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a)(1) together with recommendations for such legislative and admin-

istrative action as the Commission determines appropriate.

(2) Costs

The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall contain an estimate of the costs of establishing the program described in subsection (a)(1).

(3) Implementation

The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall contain an analysis of the feasibility of implementing the program described in subsection (a)(1) with respect to the absentee ballots to be submitted in the general election for Federal office held in 2004.

(4) Recommendations regarding the elderly and disabled

The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) include recommendations on ways that program described in subsection (a)(1) would target elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities; and

(B) identify methods to increase the number of such individuals who vote in elections for Federal office.

(c) Postal Service defined

The term “Postal Service” means the United States Postal Service established under section 201 of title 39.

(Pub. L. 107-252, title II, §246, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1691.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15386 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20987. Consultation with Standards Board and Board of Advisors

The Commission shall carry out its duties under this part in consultation with the Standards Board and the Board of Advisors.

(Pub. L. 107-252, title II, §247, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1692.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 15387 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

PART D—ELECTION ASSISTANCE

SUBPART 1—REQUIREMENTS PAYMENTS

§ 21001. Requirements payments

(a) In general

The Commission shall make a requirements payment each year in an amount determined under section 21002 of this title to each State which meets the conditions described in section 21003 of this title for the year.

(b) Use of funds

(1) In general

Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), a State receiving a requirements payment

shall use the payment only to meet the requirements of subchapter III.

(2) Other activities

A State may use a requirements payment to carry out other activities to improve the administration of elections for Federal office if the State certifies to the Commission that—

(A) the State has implemented the requirements of subchapter III; or

(B) the amount expended with respect to such other activities does not exceed an amount equal to the minimum payment amount applicable to the State under section 21002(c) of this title.

(3) Activities under Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act

A State shall use a requirements payment made using funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization under section 21007(a)(4) of this title only to meet the requirements under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act [52 U.S.C. 20301 et seq.] imposed as a result of the provisions of and amendments made by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act.

(c) Retroactive payments

(1) In general

Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, including the maintenance of effort requirements of section 21004(a)(7) of this title, a State may use a requirements payment as a reimbursement for costs incurred in obtaining voting equipment which meets the requirements of section 21081 of this title if the State obtains the equipment after the regularly scheduled general election for Federal office held in November 2000.

(2) Special rule regarding multiyear contracts

A State may use a requirements payment for any costs for voting equipment which meets the requirements of section 21081 of this title that, pursuant to a multiyear contract, were incurred on or after January 1, 2001, except that the amount that the State is otherwise required to contribute under the maintenance of effort requirements of section 21004(a)(7) of this title shall be increased by the amount of the payment made with respect to such multiyear contract.

(d) Adoption of Commission guidelines and guidance not required to receive payment

Nothing in this subpart may be construed to require a State to implement any of the voluntary voting system guidelines or any of the voluntary guidance adopted by the Commission with respect to any matter as a condition for receiving a requirements payment.

(e) Schedule of payments

As soon as practicable after the initial appointment of all members of the Commission (but in no event later than 6 months thereafter), and not less frequently than once each calendar year thereafter, the Commission shall make requirements payments to States under this subpart.

(f) Limitation

A State may not use any portion of a requirements payment—