

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 47

To establish a commission to study the impact on voter turnout of making the deadline for filing federal income tax returns conform to the date of federal elections.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 19, 1999

Mr. KYL introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

A BILL

To establish a commission to study the impact on voter turnout of making the deadline for filing federal income tax returns conform to the date of 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 “Voter Turnout En-
5 hancement Study Commission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that:

8 (1) The right of citizens of the United States
9 to vote is a fundamental right.

1 (2) It is the duty of federal, state, and local
2 governments to promote the exercise of that right to
3 vote to the greatest extent possible.

4 (3) The power to tax is a power that citizens
5 of the United States only guardedly vest in their
6 elected representatives to the federal, state, and local
7 governments.

8 (4) The only regular contacts most Americans
9 have with their government are the filing of their
10 personal income tax returns and their participation
11 in federal, state, and local elections.

12 (5) About 115 million individual income tax re-
13 turns were filed in 1998, but only about 70 million
14 Americans cast votes in that year's congressional
15 elections.

16 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

17 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a com-
18 mission to be known as the Voter Turnout Enhancement
19 Study Commission (hereafter in this Act referred to as
20 the “Commission”).

21 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

22 (1) **COMPOSITION.**—The Commission shall be
23 composed of nine members of whom—

24 (A) 3 shall be appointed by the President;

1 (B) 3 shall be appointed by the Majority Lead-
2 er of the Senate; and

3 (C) 3 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
4 House of Representatives.

5 (c) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—Mem-
6 bers shall be appointed no later than 30 days after the
7 date of the enactment of this Act, and serve for the life
8 of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall
9 not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same man-
10 ner as the original appointment.

11 (d) COMPENSATION.—

12 (1) RATES OF PAY.—Except as provided in
13 paragraph (2), members of the Commission shall
14 serve without pay.

15 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the
16 Commission shall receive travel expenses, include per
17 diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with sec-
18 tions 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

19 (e) INITIAL MEETING.—No later than 30 days after
20 the date on which all members of the Commission have
21 been appointed, the Commission shall hold its first meet-
22 ing.

23 (f) MEETINGS.—After the initial meeting, the Com-
24 mission shall meet at the call of the Chairman.

1 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the
 2 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
 3 ber of members may hold hearings.

4 (h) CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN.—The Commis-
 5 sion shall select a Chairman and Vice Chairman from
 6 among its members.

7 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

8 (a) STUDY.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall con-
 10 duct a thorough study of all matters relating to the
 11 propriety of conforming the annual filing date for
 12 federal income tax returns with the date for holding
 13 biennial federal elections.

14 (2) MATTERS STUDIED.—The matters studied
 15 by the Commission shall include—

16 (A) whether establishment of a single date
 17 on which individuals can fulfill their obligations
 18 of citizenship as both electors and taxpayers
 19 would increase participation in federal, state,
 20 and local elections; and

21 (B) a cost-benefit analysis of any change
 22 in tax filing deadlines.

23 (b) REPORT.—No later than 12 months after the
 24 date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall
 25 submit a report to the President and the Congress which

1 shall contain a detailed statement of the findings and con-
2 clusions of the Commission, together with its rec-
3 ommendations for such legislation and administrative ac-
4 tions as it considers appropriate.

5 **SEC. 5. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

6 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
7 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
8 testimony, and receive such information as the Commis-
9 sion considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this
10 Act.

11 (b) INFORMATION TO BE GATHERED.—The Commis-
12 sion shall obtain information from sources as it deems ap-
13 propriate, including, but not limited to, taxpayers and
14 their representatives, Governors, state and federal election
15 officials, and the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue
16 Service.

17 **SEC. 6. TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.**

18 The Commission shall terminate upon the submission
19 of the report under section 4.

20 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21 There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as
22 may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

