

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8607

To protect and promote the ability of members of the Armed Forces and citizens to vote by mail, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2020

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (for himself and Mr. COURTNEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To protect and promote the ability of members of the Armed Forces and citizens to vote by mail, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “U.S. Postal Service
5 Accountability and Voting Rights Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. POSTAL SERVICE OPERATION AND LEVEL OF SERV-**
2 **ICE CHANGES TEMPORARILY PROHIBITED.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—During the period beginning on
4 the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on Janu-
5 ary 31, 2021, the United States Postal Service may not
6 implement or approve any change to the operations or the
7 level of service provided by the Postal Service from those
8 in effect on January 1, 2020, that would reduce service
9 performance or impede prompt, reliable, and efficient serv-
10 ices, including any of the following actions:

11 (1) Any change in the nature of postal services
12 which will generally affect service on a nationwide or
13 substantially nationwide basis.

14 (2) Any revision of service standards.

15 (3) Any closure or consolidation of any post of-
16 fice or postal facility, or any reduction of such office
17 or facility hours.

18 (4) Any prohibition or restriction on the use of
19 overtime or overtime pay to Postal Service officers
20 or employees.

21 (5) Any change that would prevent the Postal
22 Service from meeting its service standards or cause
23 a decline in measurements of performance relative to
24 those service standards.

25 (6) Any change that would have the effect of
26 delaying deferring, or curtailing mail, allowing for

1 the non-delivery of mail to a delivery route, or in-
2 creasing the volume of undelivered mail.

3 (7) Treating election mail as any class of mail
4 other than first-class mail, regardless of whether
5 such treatment requires payment of overtime pay to
6 officers or employees of the Postal Service.

7 (8) Removing, decommissioning, or any other
8 stoppage of mail sorting machines, other than for
9 routine maintenance.

10 (9) Removing or eliminating any mail collection
11 box that is available to the public.

12 (10) Enacting any rule, policy, or standard the
13 purpose or effect of which would delay the delivery
14 of mail to or from a government entity.

15 (11) Instituting any hiring freeze.

16 (b) REVERSAL OF POLICIES HINDERING DELIVERY
17 OF MAIL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the
18 enactment of this Act, the Postal Service shall reverse any
19 initiative or action that was implemented during the pe-
20 riod beginning on January 1, 2020, and ending on the
21 date of the enactment of this Act and is causing delay
22 in processing or delivery or non-delivery of the mail.

23 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) ELECTION MAIL.—The term “election mail”
25 means mail consisting of—

1 (A) voter registration application forms,
2 completed voter registration application forms,
3 and voter registration cards or similar mate-
4 rials;

5 (B) absentee and other mail-in ballot appli-
6 cation forms, blank absentee and other mail-in
7 ballots, and completed absentee and other mail-
8 in ballots; and

9 (C) other materials relating to an election
10 which are mailed by a State or local election of-
11 ficial to individuals who are registered to vote
12 in the election.

13 (2) GOVERNMENT ENTITY.—The term “govern-
14 ment entity” means the Federal Government or any
15 State (as that term is defined in section 311 of title
16 5, United States Code) or local government and any
17 subdivision thereof.

18 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
19 authorized to be appropriated to the Postal Service Fund
20 (established under section 2003 of title 39, United States
21 Code) \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to
22 carry out this section.

1 **SEC. 3. PROHIBITING CERTAIN OPERATIONAL AND LEVEL**
2 **OF SERVICE CHANGES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—During any calendar year begin-
4 ning after the date of the enactment of this Act in which
5 a Federal election is held, the Postal Service may not im-
6 plement or approve any change to the operations or the
7 level of service provided by the Postal Service from those
8 in effect on January 1 of the calendar year, that would
9 reduce service performance or impede prompt, reliable,
10 and efficient services, including the actions described in
11 paragraphs (1) through (11) of section 2(a).

12 (b) SERVICE TO MILITARY AND FAMILIES OF MILI-
13 TARY.—The Postal Service may not implement or approve
14 any change that reduces the level of service with respect
15 to absent uniformed service voters or overseas voters below
16 the level of service in effect on January 1, 2020.

17 **SEC. 4. TRACKING PROGRAM FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS AND**
18 **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORMS;**
19 **AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSEN-**
20 **TEE BALLOT FOR ALL VOTERS.**

21 (a) REQUIREMENTS.—Title III of the Help America
22 Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21081 et seq.) is amended—

23 (1) by redesignating section 304 as section 305;

24 and

25 (2) by inserting after section 303 the following
26 new sections:

1 **“SEC. 304. ABSENTEE BALLOT AND VOTER REGISTRATION**
2 **APPLICATION FORM TRACKING PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) ABSENTEE BALLOT TRACKING.—

4 “(1) REQUIREMENT.—Each State shall carry
5 out a program to track and confirm the receipt of
6 absentee ballots in an election for Federal office
7 under which the State or local election official re-
8 sponsible for the receipt of voted absentee ballots in
9 the election carries out procedures to track and con-
10 firm the receipt of such ballots, and makes informa-
11 tion on the receipt of such ballots available to the in-
12 dividual who cast the ballot by means of online ac-
13 cess using the Internet site of the official’s office.

14 “(2) INFORMATION ON WHETHER VOTE WAS
15 COUNTED.—The information referred to under para-
16 graph (1) with respect to the receipt of an absentee
17 ballot shall include information regarding whether
18 the vote cast on the ballot was counted, and, in the
19 case of a vote which was not counted, the reasons
20 therefor.

21 “(b) VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM
22 TRACKING.—

23 “(1) REQUIREMENT.—Each State shall carry
24 out a program to track and confirm the receipt of
25 voter registration application forms in an election for
26 Federal office under which the State or local election

1 official responsible for processing such forms carries
2 out procedures to track and confirm the receipt of
3 such forms, and makes information on the receipt of
4 such forms available to the individual applicant by
5 means of online access using the Internet site of the
6 official's office.

7 “(2) INFORMATION ON WHETHER FORM WAS
8 ACCEPTED.—The information referred to under
9 paragraph (1) with respect to the receipt of a voter
10 registration application form shall include informa-
11 tion regarding whether the form was accepted and
12 the applicant is registered to vote in the election for
13 Federal office, and, in the case of a form which was
14 not accepted, the reasons therefor.

15 “(c) USE OF TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER BY
16 OFFICIALS WITHOUT INTERNET SITE.—A program estab-
17 lished by a State or local election official whose office does
18 not have an Internet site may meet the requirements of
19 subsections (a) and (b) if the official has established a toll-
20 free telephone number that may be used—

21 “(1) by an individual who cast an absentee bal-
22 lot to obtain the information on the receipt of the
23 voted absentee ballot as provided under subsection
24 (a); and

9 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
10 is authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000,000 for each
11 of fiscal years 2021 through 2023 to carry out this sec-
12 tion.”.

17 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
18 of such Act is amended—

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 303 the following new item:

•HR 8607 IH

1 **SEC. 5. PROMOTING USE OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE**
2 **BALLOT UNDER UNIFORMED AND OVERSEAS**
3 **CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT.**

4 (a) ELIMINATING EXEMPTIONS FOR STATES USING
5 ALTERNATIVE BALLOTS AND STATES MAKING BALLOTS
6 AVAILABLE 90 DAYS BEFORE ELECTION.—Section 103
7 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting
8 Act (52 U.S.C. 20303) is amended—

9 (1) by striking subsections (e) and (g); and

10 (2) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
11 section (e).

12 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
13 this section shall apply with respect to the regularly sched-
14 uled general election for Federal office held in November
15 2020 and each succeeding election for Federal office.

16 **SEC. 6. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

17 (a) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Postmaster Gen-
19 eral shall submit to Congress a report on any change to
20 the operations or the level of service provided by the Postal
21 Service from those in effect on January 1, 2020, that—

22 (1) reduced service performance or impeded
23 prompt, reliable, and efficient services, including any
24 actions described in paragraphs (1) through (11) of
25 section 2(a); and

1 (2) was implemented or approved during the
2 period beginning on June 15, 2020, and ending on
3 the date of the enactment of this Act.

4 (b) BIENNIAL REPORT.—Not later than January 1
5 of any odd-numbered calendar year beginning after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Postmaster General
7 shall submit to Congress a report on any changes de-
8 scribed in section 2(a) that were implemented or approved
9 during the previous calendar year.

10 (c) MILITARY AND OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING.—
11 Not later 30 days after the date of the enactment of this
12 Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Defense,
13 acting through the Presidential designee under the Uni-
14 formed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, shall
15 submit to Congress a report on how changes to the oper-
16 ations or level of service provided by the Postal Service
17 affect absentee voting by absent uniformed service voters
18 and overseas voters under such Act.

19 (d) IMPLEMENTATION OF MILITARY AND OVERSEAS
20 VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT.—Not later than 30 days
21 after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually
22 thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of
23 Defense shall submit to Congress a report on the effective-
24 ness of the implementation of the Military and Overseas
25 Voter Empowerment Act (subtitle H of title V of the Na-

1 tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010;
2 Public Law 111–84) and the amendments made by such
3 Act, including the effectiveness of such Act and such
4 amendments in promoting registration and voting by ab-
5 sent uniformed service voters and overseas voters and in
6 increasing the availability and effectiveness of voter reg-
7 istration and voting assistance services for such voters,
8 and shall include in the report such recommendations as
9 the Inspector General considers appropriate for improving
10 the availability and effectiveness of such services for such
11 voters.

12 **SEC. 7. CYBERSPACE INFORMATION THREAT TRAINING.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any currently man-
14 dated training, the Secretary of Defense shall annually
15 furnish to all members of the Armed Forces and all civil-
16 ian employees of the Department of Defense training re-
17 garding cyberspace information threats.

18 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

19 (1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered en-
20 tity” means—

21 (A) a government of a foreign country or
22 an agency or instrumentality of a foreign coun-
23 try;

24 (B) a foreign person that is aided, abetted,
25 or directed by a government of a foreign coun-

1 try or an agency or instrumentality of a foreign
2 country;

3 (C) a terrorist organization; or

4 (D) any other foreign adversary of the
5 United States.

6 (2) CYBERSPACE INFORMATION THREAT.—The
7 term “cyberspace information threat” means any
8 true, false, or misleading information from a covered
9 entity that is—

10 (A) communicated through cyberspace; and

11 (B) misleading or influential in a manner
12 that constitutes a threat to national security or
13 to the democratic processes of the United
14 States, or that operates to the advantage of a
15 covered entity.

16 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) ABSENT UNIFORMED SERVICE VOTER;
19 OVERSEAS VOTER.—The terms “absent uniformed
20 service voter” and “overseas voter” have the mean-
21 ings given such terms in section 107 of the Uni-
22 formed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act
23 (52 U.S.C. 20310).

1 (2) FEDERAL ELECTIONS.—The term “Federal
2 election” means a regularly scheduled general elec-
3 tion for Federal office.

4 (3) POSTAL SERVICE.—The term “Postal Serv-
5 ice” has the meaning given such term in section 102
6 of title 39, United States Code.

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