

AMENDMENT NO. 2900, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide for a manual audit capacity that permits voters to verify their vote at the time it is cast and used as the official record for recounts)

On page 5, strike line 19 through 21, and insert the following:

(2) AUDIT CAPACITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The voting system shall produce a record with an audit capacity for such system.

(b) MANUAL AUDIT CAPACITY.—

(1) PERMANENT PAPER RECORD.—The voting system shall produce a permanent paper record with a manual audit capacity for such system.

(2) CORRECTION OF ERRORS.—The voting system shall provide the voter with an opportunity to change the ballot or correct any error before the permanent paper record is produced.

(3) OFFICIAL RECORD FOR RECOUNTS.—The printed record produced under subparagraph (A) shall be available as an official record for any recount conducted with respect to any election for Federal office in which the system is used.

AMENDMENT NO. 2865

(Purpose: To ensure that absentee ballots of overseas voters are collected regularly and returned to the United States in a timely manner)

On page 68, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

SEC. 402. DELIVERY OF MAIL FROM OVERSEAS PRECEDING FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—

(1) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—Section 1566(g) of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 1602(a)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107-107; 115 Stat. 1274), is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(B) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

“(2) The Secretary shall ensure that voting materials are transmitted expeditiously by military postal authorities at all times. The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, implement measures to ensure that a postmark or other official proof of mailing date is provided on each absentee ballot collected at any overseas location or vessel at sea whenever the Department of Defense is responsible for collecting mail for return shipment to the United States. The Secretary shall ensure that the measures implemented under the preceding sentence do not result in the delivery of absentee ballots to the final destination of such ballots after the date on which the election for Federal office is held.

“(3) The Secretary of each military department shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide notice to members of the armed forces stationed at that installation of the last date before a general Federal election for which absentee ballots mailed from a postal facility located at that installation can reasonably be expected to be timely delivered to the appropriate State and local election officials.”

(2) REPORT.—The Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report describing the measures to be implemented under section 1566(g)(2) of title 10, United States Code (as added by paragraph (1)), to ensure the timely transmittal and postmarking of voting materials and identifying the persons responsible for implementing such measures.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in section 1602 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002

(Public Law 107-107; 115 Stat. 1274) upon the enactment of that Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 2894, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require the Election Administration Commission to study the advisability of establishing an election day holiday)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out its duty under section 303(a)(1)(G), the Commission, within 6 months after its establishment, shall provide a detailed report to the Congress on the advisability of establishing an election day holiday, including options for holding elections for Federal offices on an existing legal public holiday such as Veterans Day, as proclaimed by the President, or of establishing uniform weekend voting hours.

(b) FACTORS CONSIDERED.—In conducting that study, the Commission shall take into consideration the following factors:

(1) Only 51 percent of registered voters in the United States turned out to vote during the November 2000 Presidential election—well below the worldwide turnout average of 72.9 percent for Presidential elections between 1999 and 2000. After the 2000 election, the Census Bureau asked thousands of non-voters why they did not vote. The top reason for not voting, given by 22.6 percent of the respondents, was that they were too busy or had a conflicting work or school schedule.

(2) One of the recommendations of the National Commission on Election Reform led by former Presidents Carter and Ford is “Congress should enact legislation to hold presidential and congressional elections on a national holiday”. Holding elections on the legal public holiday of Veterans Day, as proclaimed by the President and observed by the Federal government, may allow election day to be a national holiday without adding the cost and administrative burden of an additional holiday.

(3) Holding elections on a holiday or weekend could allow more working people to vote more easily, potentially increasing voter turnout. It could increase the pool of available poll workers and make public buildings more available for use as polling places. Holding elections over a weekend could provide flexibility needed for uniform polling hours.

(4) Several proposals to make election day a holiday or to shift election day to a weekend have been offered in the 107th Congress. Any new voting day options should be sensitive to the religious observances of voters of all faiths and to our nation's veterans.

AMENDMENT NO. 2926

(Purpose: To improve State recount and contest procedures in elections for Federal office)

On page 54, strike lines 22 and 23, and insert the following:

necessary to provide such assistance;

(I)(i) 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;

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

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

(J) such other matters as the Commission

Mr. DODD. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, let me indicate to the Republican Senators that it is our bipartisan goal to finish this bill tomorrow night. We estimate we have maybe 8 to 10 amendments that may actually require a vote—maybe fewer—but in any event, we intend to press through the day tomorrow and wrap this bill up as early as possible tomorrow.

Mr. DODD. Madam President, that is all we have.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

READ ACROSS AMERICA

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today with my good friend and colleague from Rhode Island, Senator REED, to encourage parents and schools throughout our country to celebrate National Read Across America Day by reading to children. The resolution we submitted on February 15th asks parents to read to their children for at least 30 minutes on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. The resolution also honors Dr. Seuss for his success in helping to open children to the joys of reading.

Five years ago, the National Education Association conducted the first Read Across America Day by providing teachers with resources to celebrate reading. The day was intended to promote reading activities not just on the day of the celebration, but throughout the year. Dr. Seuss' birthday was chosen for the celebration because, in the words of the NEA, “he epitomizes a love of learning and his use of rhyme makes his books an effective tool for teaching young children the basic skills they need to be successful.”

In the last 5 years, more than 40 national education and reading associations have joined the NEA in making Read Across America the largest celebration of reading in the world. Groups such as the American Library Association, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the International Reading Association, Reading is Fundamental, and the Screen Actors Guild all have assisted in raising the profile of reading education and making this day a tremendous success.

The importance of this day and this resolution is underscored by the challenge it addresses. Our Nation's early literacy problem is well documented. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 20 million school-age children have difficulty reading. Only approximately 2.3 million of these children are served in special education under the category of learning disabilities. The remaining 17.7 million children who are poor readers do not meet the eligibility requirements for the learning disability category. Some are provided assistance in the form of compensatory education, but others are overlooked altogether.

Often it is only after a child develops a significant problem that any intervention at all occurs. Typically, a child has reached the third or fourth grade before reading failure is diagnosed. At that point, what might have been a slight lag in learning had it been caught early has developed into a more serious and challenging learning disability. For students that have reached the third grade without the ability to read, every paragraph, every assignment, every day in the classroom is a struggle. They constantly battle embarrassment and feelings of inadequacy, fearing that their classmates, their friends, will discover they cannot read. It is no wonder so many children without basic reading skills lose their natural curiosity and excitement for learning, for reading is the gateway to academic success.

Last year, the President and Congress worked together to complete a major reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, two new programs, Reading First and Early Reading First, will bring new federal resources for reading instruction and early reading intervention. I am delighted that my Reading First proposal was incorporated into the final education reform package, and even more excited that nearly \$1 billion in Federal funding has been allocated to this initiative in the first year. It is my hope the new services will reach children before a problem develops and before they fall too far behind their peers.

Although I have great faith that these new programs will effectively reduce the rate of reading failure throughout our country, nothing can replace the learning that takes place between parents and their children. Much of the learning and preparation that make reading possible occurs long before a child ever sets foot in a classroom. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, children who were read to three or more times in a week by their parents are almost twice as likely to be able to identify every letter of the alphabet. They are also more likely to be able to count to 20, write their own names, and read or pretend to read. It delights me to see the 2-year-old daughter of my chief of staff read to her stuffed animals. She

takes a book, sits with them on the couch, and pretends to read them a story. When a child enters kindergarten already recognizing letters and familiar with books, she or he is better prepared to learn and less likely to encounter difficulty in learning to read.

This year, the Maine Education Association is hosting festivities throughout the State on Read Across America Day, and I hope to attend Eliot Elementary School in York County this Friday to join in their celebration of reading. I encourage my colleagues not only to support this resolution, but also to make time to visit a classroom and help children discover the joys of reading. I can tell from first-hand experience that taking the time to read to children is not only a worthwhile investment but also a wonderful experience, and I know the Presiding Officer reads often to her twin sons and experiences that some joy. I have read to children in more than 70 schools across the State of Maine and never tire of the joy and satisfaction such experiences bring.

I often read books by Maine authors, such as "Blueberries for Sal," or "Miss Rumphias" to show children that they, too, can grow up to author books. I never tire of the joy and satisfaction of going into a classroom and reading to children. Indeed, Madam President, the last school I visited was the Edna Libby School in Standish, ME, a wonderful elementary school. I read to the students and I answered their questions. Then the reading coordinator presented me with a pin that I am wearing today. It is the "Read Across America" pin. It pictures the United States as well as Dr. Seuss's famous cat. That should be the inspiration for all of us.

The NEA has graciously agreed to donate one dozen Dr. Seuss books to any school visited by a Senator on Friday, March 1. I congratulate the NEA for the success of its Read Across America Program, and I applaud all of our schoolteachers, librarians, and most of all, our parents, for their commitment for teaching reading.

I hope we can pass this resolution this week in time for Reading Across America Day and bring even more attention to the benefits of parental involvement and reading to our children.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise to join my colleague, Senator COLLINS, in support of a resolution to declare March 2nd Read Across America Day. We submitted this resolution, S. Res. 211, on February 15.

Read Across America Day is an annual reading motivation and awareness program begun by the National Education Association, and supported by more than 40 national non-profit and association partners, including the American Library Association, American Association of School Librarians, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, International Reading Association, Learning First Alliance, the Library of Congress—Center

for the Book National Institute for Literacy, National PTA, Reading Is Fundamental, and YMCA of the USA. The celebration includes activities in schools, libraries, and communities across the nation that bring reading excitement to children of all ages.

March 2nd is a fitting day for such a celebration of reading, since it is the birthday of Theodore Geisel, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss, the beloved children's author and illustrator. His books have inspired, and continue to inspire, generations of children to discover the joy of reading. Moreover, Dr. Seuss' inventive use of rhyme make his books an enormously effective tool for teaching basic reading skills to children.

According to the latest results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), from 1992 to 2000 the reading scores of fourth graders remained flat. What is most alarming is that the gap between the highest and lowest achieving students is widening—the average score for top students increased, while the average score for bottom students declined even more significantly.

These results indicate that our students need a great deal of help to learn to read and achieve. Addressing the reading deficiency of our Nation's students is essential, and clearly an area where Federal resources and support can bring about positive change.

This is why I was pleased to join Senator COLLINS in supporting the inclusion of the Reading First and Early Reading First programs in the No Child Left Behind Act signed into law earlier this year. These programs provide professional development for teachers to improve reading instruction and support reading initiatives for younger children. Coupled with resources for up-to-date and engaging school library books through the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program, which I authored and offered with Senator COLLINS as an amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act, we are taking steps to boost children's reading skills and love for reading.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this resolution in order to show our commitment to the importance of literacy and to celebrate the joy of reading.

BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. HOLLINGS. Madam President, the communications bill by Congressmen TAUZIN and DINGELL that the House will vote on this week is blasphemy. Hailed as a way to enhance competition, it eliminates it. Touted as a way to enhance broadband communications, it merely allows the Bell companies to extend their local monopoly into broadband.

I know the Bells' tricks, based on past performance. In 1984 when Judge Harold Green broke up AT&T's monopoly in long distance, he required AT&T