

Neal (NC)	Rowland (CT)	Stearns
Nelson	Rowland (GA)	Stenholm
Nielson	Roybal	Stokes
Nowak	Russo	Studds
Oakar	Sabo	Stump
Oberstar	Salki	Sundquist
Olin	Sangmeister	Swift
Ortiz	Sarpalitus	Synar
Owens (NY)	Savage	Tailon
Owens (UT)	Sawyer	Tanner
Oxley	Saxton	Tauzin
Packard	Schaefer	Taylor
Fallone	Scheuer	Thomas (CA)
Fanetta	Schiff	Thomas (CA)
Farker	Schneider	Thomas (WY)
Parris	Schroeder	Torres
Patterson	Schuette	Torricelli
Paxon	Schumer	Towns
Payne (NJ)	Sensenbrenner	Traficant
Payne (VA)	Shaw	Traxler
Pease	Shays	Udall
Felosi	Shumway	Unsoeld
Penny	Shuster	Upton
Perkins	Sikorski	Valentine
Petri	Sisisky	Vander Jagt
Pickett	Skaggs	Vento
Pickle	Skeen	Visolocky
Porter	Skelton	Volkmer
Poshard	Slattery	Vucanovich
Price	Slaughter (NY)	Walgren
Pursell	Slaughter (VA)	Walker
Quillen	Smith (FL)	Walsh
Rahall	Smith (IA)	Washington
Rangel	Smith (NE)	Watkins
Ravenel	Smith (NJ)	Weber
Ray	Smith (TX)	Wells
Regula	Smith (VT)	Weldon
Rhodes	Smith, Denny	Wheat
Richardson	(OR)	Whittaker
Ridge	Smith, Robert	Whitten
Rinaldo	(NH)	Williams
Ritter	Smith, Robert	Wilson
Roberts	(OR)	Wise
Robinson	Snowe	Wolf
Roe	Solarz	Wolpe
Rogers	Solomon	Wyden
Rohrabacher	Spence	Wylie
Ros-Lehtinen	Spratt	Yates
Rose	Staggers	Yatron
Rostenkowski	Stallings	Young (AK)
Roth	Stangeland	Young (FL)
Roukema	Stark	

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—18

AuCoin	Early	Obey
Bilirakis	Ford (TN)	Pashayan
Cardin	Guarini	Schulze
Dornan (CA)	Lewis (CA)	Sharp
Durbin	Marlenee	Tauke
Dymally	Mrazek	Waxman

□ 1450

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended, and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT OF 1989

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McDERMOTT). Pursuant to House Resolution 309, and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2190.

□ 1452

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2190) to establish national voter registration procedures for elections

for Federal office, and for other purposes, with Mr. HUGHES in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. SWIFT] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington [Mr. SWIFT].

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SWIFT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, we are all familiar with the sad record of voting in our Nation's elections. In the last 30 years, voting participation has declined almost 12 percent. In the last Presidential election, only slightly more than half the eligible voters actually went to the polls.

Mr. Chairman, I am greatly troubled by those figures, and I know many of our colleagues in this House are similarly concerned, for they indicate that millions of citizens are not participating in our democracy.

Many factors are responsible for the dropoff in voting, some of which are beyond our control. Higher voter turnout levels can't simply be legislatively mandated.

But we can do something about by far the most important factor, which is registration. The simple fact of the matter is, you cannot vote if you are not registered, and for many Americans today, getting registered just is not very easy. Indeed, when people who didn't vote in 1988 were asked why, the reason given most often was not being registered.

Registration has been a barrier to voter participation in our democracy since the late 19th century, when the poll tax and literacy tests were introduced to prevent recent European immigrants, blacks, and the rural poor from exercising their constitutional right to vote. While the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 eliminated the more obvious impediments to registration, it left a complicated maze of local laws and procedures through which citizens must navigate. Testimony before our committee revealed that in many jurisdictions around the country, eligible voters continue to be deprived of their right to vote as a result of restrictive registration practices.

This is not only outdated—if it ever had validity—but it is clearly hypocritical. In our system, no right is more basic than the right to vote. Its exercise is the very symbol of democratic self-government.

It is not that we don't know how to do things better. Many States, in every region of the Nation have reformed their registration laws, experimented with improvements and found cost-effective ways of making registration

easier while keeping the system secure from fraud.

Today—with this bill—we have the opportunity to gain from these laboratories of democracy and establish some proven techniques to improve voter registration all across the land. We have the chance to recognize once and for all that the role of our Government is not to discourage voter participation but, indeed, to encourage it.

H.R. 2190, the National Voter Registration Act, is a bipartisan bill which ensures citizens wider and more convenient opportunities for registration while still maintaining the integrity of our electoral process. The bill is the product of extensive committee hearings and meetings with citizen groups, academics, local officials, and many other people concerned about declining voter participation. In fact, the central concepts of the bill were recommended to our committee by election officials themselves. H.R. 2190 counts the support of the League of Women Voters, the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate and many other civic organizations. The National Association of Secretaries of State has strongly endorsed the bill's registration programs.

I have also worked closely with my colleague and the ranking Republican member of my subcommittee, BILL THOMAS, and I want to take special note of his substantial contributions in shaping this legislation. Special credit also goes to the majority whip, BILL GRAY, for crucial assistance, to Speaker TOM FOLEY, and to JOHN CONYERS, whose efforts over the years to extend the franchise to every citizen has made the vote before use today possible.

H.R. 2190 is a very simple and straightforward bill. First, let me tell you what it does not do. It does not change the qualifications for voting. Age limits, citizenship and residency requirements, laws dealing with felon's rights. None of those are changed.

Nor does the bill in any way change the rights and remedies contained in the Voting Rights Act as amended, or contain provisions for same-day registration.

What H.R. 2190 does do is expand the opportunities for registration in three major ways.

First, the bill requires States to permit eligible citizens to register when applying for or renewing their driver's licenses. This is the so-called motor-voter provisions. Some 87 percent of Americans of voting age have driver's licenses, so motor-voter will make registration immediately accessible to millions of citizens from every walk of life. And in States where personal ID's are available through motor vehicle departments, that too will provide a convenient registration opportunity.

We use the driver's license procedure because it is a unique system already in place in all 50 States. Since the driv-

er's license application requires most of the information needed to determine an eligible registration applicant—and in most States contains the extra security protection of photo-identification—the two systems are ideal for meshing together. In fact, 12 States and the District of Columbia have already developed motor-voter registration programs, with great success.

Second, the bill requires all States to allow citizens to apply for registration by mail. Postcard registration is available right now for more than half the eligible voters in the Nation, so the bill simply extends this opportunity to everyone. The many States that have already implemented mail registration programs report no increases in election fraud.

Third, the bill provides for registration at various Government agencies, such as Government revenue offices and public libraries. Agency registration is also in wide use today.

These three registration programs complement traditional procedures for registering, such as registration at State election offices and local courthouses, and, when fully implemented, will reach nearly every eligible voter. With the exception of printing additional forms to take care of the anticipated increase in applications, they should add little burden to election officials. The State experience, for example, indicates that motor-voter registration adds only a few seconds to the total driver's license application process.

In fact, the bill will give election officials the necessary tools to do their jobs more efficiently and cost-effectively. Costly registration campaigns can be reduced, the enormous expense of overtime and extra help will be largely eliminated, and by smoothing out the registration process over the full year, election officials will be better able to manage their operations and serve the public.

The other major part of H.R. 2190 provides for the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date registration lists. Inaccurate registration lists are the bane of every election official, can lead to fraud and are extremely costly to the states, political parties, candidates and others who depend upon them for effective voter contact.

In the course of our hearings, the committee discovered a wide range of procedures used by election jurisdictions around the country to update their lists. While some of these procedures were entirely reasonable and appropriate, others were questionable and some blatantly discriminatory. No one can really argue against having accurate registration lists, but there are plenty of schemes and tricks around to knock eligible people off the rolls. More than 40 States currently purge every citizen who fails to vote in one or more elections. A number of States actually drop nonvoters without any notification.

It is the committee's clear intent that no one is to be removed from the registration rolls without clear evidence that he or she no longer qualifies to vote. In fact, Mr. Chairman, the committee felt so strongly about the sanctity of registration, that the bill bans States from using discriminatory means, further, prohibits anyone from being taken off the registration list simply for failing to vote. These are major reforms of present practice.

The bill provides States with two options for verifying their registration rolls.

The first option makes use of the U.S. Postal Service's National Change of Address Program. Under this innovative program, voters who move will, for the first time, be able to update their registration information simply by filling out standard change-of-address forms—the same ones we use today. This will allow States to transfer the names of these voters from the registration list in their former precincts onto the list in the precincts into which they are moving. Not only will registration lists in both locations thus be automatically updated, but States will be able to notify relocated voters of their new polling places.

In lieu of this option, States are required to send registrants, at least once every 4 years, a nonforwardable address verification mailing. The bill allows States to limit their verification mailings to people who failed to vote in the last general election. Individuals whose nonforwardable mailing is returned to election officials will be sent a second, forwardable mailing, informing them that if the elections board does not hear from them within 30 days, their names will be transferred to an inactive, 4-year holding list. At any time during that 4-year period, individuals so transferred may show up at the polls and vote merely by establishing their eligibility.

I believe—and so do most election officials—that the Postal Service option is the one most jurisdictions will select. Given that one-third of the Nation moves every 2 years and that recent movers are among the lightest-voting groups today—due to difficulties re-registering—its potential impact on voting participation is obviously great. Moreover, it is inexpensive and will even save States money in the long run.

Which brings me to the subject of cost. As with any investment, H.R. 2190 does entail some up-front expenses. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that compliance with H.R. 2190 will cost States, in direct outlays, an average of \$20 million to \$25 million a year for the first 5 years of the program.

The first thing that should be noted is that the bill provides States plenty of help in implementing registration programs. In fact, H.R. 2190 authorizes "such sums as may be necessary," including up to \$50 million in fiscal

year 1992 to help States verify their registration rolls.

Second, costs under the bill will rapidly decline over time. For example, costs associated with the motor-voter program will decrease significantly once the initial, 3- to 5-year driver license cycle in each State elapses. The Michigan motor-voter program—which began in 1975—serves 750,000 people a year and costs just \$1,000,000. That comes out to 13 cents per transaction.

The expense of mail and agency registration programs will also decline after the beginning "start-up" period, during which time new forms must be printed and distributed. The incremental, operating cost of individual registration transactions is very low. And since registration lists will be kept accurate, States also will save the printing and postage expenses that arise from sending ineligible voters costly sample ballots and other voting materials.

We all know how difficult it is to estimate the cost of a new program, especially one such as this. But based on the information gathered during our hearings, I believe the CBO's estimate to be realistic. I also think it's important to put the estimate in proper perspective. The real question, after all, is not the expense of any specific provision contained in the bill but the cost to our Nation of more than 50 million unregistered voters. From that vantage point, \$20 million to \$25 million in annual costs for the first 5 years of the program is a small price to underwrite the vitality of our democracy, and I am confident our appropriations colleagues will have no problems funding this legislation equitably.

Mr. Chairman, at this point let me quickly respond to some of the questions I have most frequently been asked about this bill:

Does the bill provide for same day registration? The answer is no, it does not. After careful study, the committee determined that it is not feasible at this point to mandate same day registration as a national procedure, although the issue may be worth revisiting in several years, by which time implementation of H.R. 2190 is likely to have brought about a significant reduction in the number of eligible voters still unregistered.

Will the bill promote election fraud? The answer is absolutely no. H.R. 2190 is a tough antifraud bill. This legislation not only contains all the present safeguards against fraud and abuse, but goes beyond the security standards now in place. Not only does it get rid of the deadwood on the rolls—thereby reducing the potential for fraud at the source—but it requires every applicant for registration to sign an oath under penalty of perjury that he or she is eligible to vote. And as I mentioned earlier, the motor-voter program requires more identification than current registration procedures.

Does the bill have any affect on the Voting Rights Act as amended? Here too, the answer is no. As I mentioned earlier, this bill establishes a new legal framework addressing registration in addition to existing law, in particular, the Voting Rights Act. Nothing in this bill is meant to change the existing rights and remedies provided under the Voting Rights Act or to undercut the standards of proof governing that act.

Does the enforcement section of the bill in anyway inhibit individuals or groups from registering voters. Again, the answer is no. While H.R. 2190 is a strong antifraud bill, its enforcement section appropriately covers only those actions and omissions done intentionally. This provision contains in its frame the requirement that all actions and omissions covered by the section be knowing and willful. The requirement that individuals act "knowingly and willfully" stated in the opening frame to the section covers each element of the section, including those in both subsection (1) and subsection (2).

Getting H.R. 2190 to the floor has been a process of consultation, compromise, and refinement. What has emerged from these wide discussions is a bill which can be supported by every Member of this body who is truly interested in expanding the opportunities for eligible citizens to register to vote. This bill has wide bipartisan support, and for the record I'd like to note the following Members who wanted to become cosponsors of H.R. 2190 but whose names were not included when the committee's report was printed: Representatives BOSCO, DELLUMS, DOWNEY, FLAKE, FRANK, HAYES, KENNELLY, KLEZCKA, PEASE, SABO, STOKES, TOWNS, WAXMAN, and WELDON.

Mr. Chairman, our Nation has come far in our electoral practices, granting the franchise to blacks, women, and those over the age of 18, and protecting voters against discrimination.

But too many eligible citizens today fail to vote, in large measure because too many obstacles to voting still remain. Declining voter participation is a national embarrassment and poses potentially serious problems for our political institutions.

As we applaud the outbreak of democracy and freedom abroad, we should take this step to renew our democracy here at home. The founders of this Nation expressly entrusted Congress with the responsibility for determining the manner by which Members of this great body are elected. Our unfinished business is to reduce the obstacles to voting to the absolute minimum while assuring that our elections remain fair and secure. H.R. 2190 is the most significant election reform legislation since the Voting Rights Act itself, represents a giant step in that direction. I urge my colleagues to give it an overwhelming vote of approval.

□ 1500

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 6 minutes.

(Mr. THOMAS of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, let me rise in support of a piece of legislation which is less than its critics have claimed it to be, and, frankly, more than some of its supporters believe it to be. It is a piece of legislation which, although comprehensive at the Federal level, provides a significant amount of individual decisionmaking for States and areas where clearly the States should have that kind of individual decisionmaking.

I, too, as my colleagues, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. SWIFT], the chairman of the subcommittee, with whom I have enjoyed a long and mostly positive working relationship, feel compelled primarily to talk about what this bill is not, since most of the criticisms of the bill are in fact criticisms which the bill does not deserve. For example, I would urge all my colleagues to be very, very careful about material that has been disseminated in terms of cost. There is in fact one piece of information from a study group which says that the cost of H.R. 2190 to the Federal Government is \$200 million. If we would examine the documents, I think we would find that the actual amount is \$200,000.

Now, we are often accused of dropping zeroes in spending money in various areas, but I would hope that when we report on this bill, we would understand that it is not a \$200 million cost but a \$200,000 cost.

During debate on the rule there was an accusation that the bill is virtually useless because of its vagueness, for example, in section 106. There is no specificity in terms of the kinds of criminal convictions under which someone would be denied the right to vote. There was a discussion about the fact that if they meant a felony, they should have said, "a felony," and if they meant a misdemeanor, they should have said, "a misdemeanor." They said this bill is too vague to be of any use, "and look at all the mandating that is required."

I would urge my colleagues to read the entire section in dealing with the information on death, criminal conviction, or mental incapacity, because it is stated over and over again in the bill, after that kind of vital statistic information is transmitted to the official voter registration list for adjustment, it is under State law. The decision as to which criminal conviction removes someone from the voting list is to be determined under State law. What kind of mental incapacity is to be determined as to what removes someone from the voter list is to be determined under State law.

If someone wants to argue that we are vague in that area, I guess they can argue on a specificity basis that we are vague. We do not have the Federal

Government dictating what specific criminal convictions are going to keep someone from or remove someone from the voter list. We had no intention of doing that. We had no intention of involving ourselves in an area where the State ought to make that decision, and in fact the bill says that the States should make that decision.

We also had some of our colleagues upset by the fact that in their particular States fishing and hunting licenses are sold at 7-Eleven's and other kinds of convenience outlets, and that all of a sudden the Federal Government is mandating that the local 7-Eleven register voters. I would entertain someone's examination of the bill and the terminology that was used in an attempt to get government agencies to involve themselves in the voter registration area, requiring absolute neutrality under Federal penalty of law, in a neutral way offering the opportunity to register people, not in private enterprise areas, but for example, as the bill says, in "fishing and hunting bureaus," agencies of the government.

Now, we have an outreach program for the private sector to be involved if they so wish. In California we have been able to involve fast food franchises and outlets in a number of other areas in offering an opportunity to register people to vote. I think, given today's lifestyle of people, it is not inappropriate that the Government try to be as outreaching and forward-looking as possible, including the private sector, in extending people an opportunity to register.

Mr. Chairman, another complaint levied against the bill is that it is supposed to increase voter turnout, and some say, "We really don't think it is supposed to increase voter turnout or we we don't think it will." I will ask them to turn to the purposes of the act. No. 1, it says, "to increase registration of citizens as voters." It is not that the registered voters are necessarily going to turn out.

I say to my colleagues that I think we have a vast amount of work to do in the area of an honest and fair apportionment, in the area of campaign finance, and in putting back into the picture local people so they can feel as though they have a chance to influence an election. All of those are items that would affect turnout.

What this bill intends to do and indeed does is to get people in a convenient way registered and, more importantly, in an orderly fashion, removed from the rolls so that what we have are accurate rolls. I think a reasonable program to get people to vote is to, first of all, have an accurate roll from which one can make those choices, not one which is exceedingly difficult to get on or impossible to get off, but one which is reasonable and orderly in putting people on and reasonable and orderly in removing them.

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Maryland [Mr. MFUME].

(Mr. MFUME asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Washington [Mr. SWIFT] for yielding time to me, and I rise in very strong support of the measure before us today.

Mr. Chairman, I join my colleagues in strong support of this momentous and historic piece of legislation, H.R. 2190, the Voter Registration Act of 1990. This bill will make voter registration more accessible to the millions of Americans who, for a number of reasons, do not have the means to register.

Five years ago we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to mark the significant progress we have made in allowing our citizenry the opportunity to vote. With the passage of the 1965 act, many blatant and sinister obstacles administered through the repressive Jim Crow laws were dismantled. Yet, today many Americans—particularly minorities and low-income persons—are still locked out of the electoral process as other impediments prevent full participation in the electoral process on election day.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has one of the worst voter turnout records among industrialized nations. In the Presidential election year of 1984, only 53.1 percent of the voting age went to the ballot box, and in 1986 only 37.1 percent. And only 50.8 percent of the population voted in the last Presidential election. Some 75 million Americans did not participate in the 1988 election, and an amazing 59 million of these citizens were not registered to vote at all according to the U.S. census and voting registration in the November 1988 report. The disappointingly low election turnout represents a movement away from the principle for which this Nation has revered over the last 200 years. It is truly a tragedy when nearly half of our citizens do not cast their ballots and exercise their rights as citizens. And, when we in the United States are in dead last among the democracies of the world as a voting populous, I believe that it is our duty as elected officials to remove any barriers which prevent political participation.

The right to cast one's ballot is a sacred one hallowed by the countless number of men and women who dedicated their lives during the civil rights struggle to gain equal rights for all Americans. Everyone must have the opportunity to have a voice in our government. It took the lives of James Cheney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Swerner, and others to awaken Congress to the harsh realities of voting impediments and prompted the Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These brave patriots gave their lives so that others may have the privilege they endeavored to make available for everyone. I hope that their lives were not lost in vain especially when this Congress, on this day, of this year, can extend universal suffrage and uphold the one man, one vote principle established in the Reynolds versus Sims case in 1964. After more than two decades, we have taken down part of a wall denying African-Americans and others the right to vote by removing literacy tests, poll taxes, and other shenanigans. However, these have been replaced in disguise by the inability to get to the polls, and missed op-

portunities to register. The low national voter turnout in November 1988 represents a sad chapter in the story of democracy.

Mr. Chairman, I am optimistic as we turn the pages of this story on to a new chapter. We can and must provide the means to allow every American the opportunity to take part in the decisionmaking process. H.R. 2190 is the mechanism that will engender greater voter participation in the United States. This legislation simply allows voter registration while one registers for a driving permit, or registration by mail for those who cannot register in person.

It has already been proven that when people register they are likely to vote. In fact, some 80 to 90 percent of those registered actually cast their vote. However, only 60 percent of voting age Americans are registered. In a poll conducted after the 1988 election, more than one-third of the nonvoters surveyed said that registration prevented them from voting in the election. Thus, I think we should direct our efforts to removing obstacles to voter registration. I call upon my colleagues in this Chamber to move away from partisan politics and toward cooperative politics so that the door of every registrar in the land will always be open.

We must capitalize on this occasion to move forward with the creed of universal suffrage—an essential right in a political democracy. To remain true to the ideals inscribed in our Constitution, the people of our great Nation must be afforded the opportunity to employ their rights as citizens.

I urge my colleagues to set an example for the millions of Americans viewing this debate and cast your vote in favor of the National Voter Registration Act of 1990.

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4½ minutes to the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. ANNUNZIO].

(Mr. ANNUNZIO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1510

Mr. ANNUNZIO. Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be one of the original co-sponsors of H.R. 2190, and I rise in strong support of it. As chairman of the Committee on House Administration, I want to congratulate the distinguished chairman of the Elections Subcommittee, Mr. SWIFT, for sponsoring H.R. 2190, a bill that would establish a uniform national standard for voter registration.

I also want to thank the hard-working ranking minority member, Mr. THOMAS, for his diligence and cooperation in both the subcommittee and in full committee.

Mr. Chairman, one of the precious rights guaranteed in our Constitution is the right to vote. Voting must be possible for all of our citizens if democracy is to have meaning. From our earliest days, restrictions on the right to vote have been gradually eliminated. We no longer require voters to be men, property owners, or long-time residents to be eligible. This bill takes the next step by eliminating yet another barrier to full voting participation.

Voter turnout in the United States has declined drastically and nearly continuously since 1960. The National Voter Registration Act of 1990 will help reverse that troubling trend.

In 1984, there were approximately 168 million citizens of voting age; 93 million voted for the President, while 75 million did not. In 1986, 61 million people voted for congressional candidates, while 111 million potential voters failed to go to the polls.

Over three-fifths of eligible Americans did not vote in 1986, producing the third lowest midterm election turnout in a century and a half. Excluding the South, the 1986 voter participation rate was the lowest level recorded for an off-year election since 1798.

Major studies have been designed to discover why so many Americans do not vote. The No. 1 reason was not being registered. Registration procedures have placed tremendous restraints on eligible voters for a long time. This bill is designed to remove those restraints.

Nonvoters do not vote because they find out too late they are not registered. H.R. 2190 prohibits the removal of any individual simply for not voting. It establishes address verification procedures to update and maintain registration rolls.

The motor-voter registration provision in the act would allow high school students to apply for voter registration when obtaining their driver's license.

H.R. 2190 provides mail-in voter registration, which will allow our senior citizens and handicapped citizens to register through the mail. It also provides voter registration through Federal and State agencies, granting maximum accessibility.

This bill is the result of a year of hard work by all of the members of Chairman SWIFT's Election Subcommittee. In reaching this final stage, both the majority and the minority gave up some important positions, and both the majority and the minority gained some important language. This is a bipartisan bill. Even the minority views in the report are bipartisan. The Committee on House Administration has always tried hard to accommodate and incorporate everybody's views to the maximum extent. Mr. SWIFT and Mr. THOMAS have done so in this bill.

The committee recognized that States would incur some costs in setting up new registration programs. We provided for \$50 million to help them do so. That is about 25 cents for every citizen eligible to vote. So cost should not be any reason to oppose this bill. You should vote for this bill because it will make it possible for many more citizens to register and vote. It does not make it easier to commit fraud—on the contrary, it provides additional safeguards against fraud.

Mr. Chairman, this Congress has talked a lot about campaign reforms.

So far, we haven't done much about campaign reforms. This bill—a simple and uncomplicated voter registration bill—is a test of our willingness. If we can't act on this bill, what chance do we have when we get down to business on real campaign reforms? If we mean what we say, we have the opportunity today to prove it.

Mr. Chairman, I urge passage of this bipartisan bill.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. FRENZEL], the distinguished former ranking member of the Committee on House Administration.

(Mr. FRENZEL ask and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRENZEL. Mr. Chairman, the 1988 Presidential election was a continuation of a trend that we have seen in the United States since 1960 of declining participation. Yes, there was a half-percent bleep in 1984, but otherwise we have been on a downhill grade. Many of us have been embarrassed by the fact that even the citizens of El Salvador are able to vote at twice the participation rate as those people who vote to install a United States Congress in these seats in this House.

Mr. Chairman, we have wondered about this. We have pondered. We have thought of ways to change our procedures to encourage greater participation.

I myself have come to the conclusion that a corollary of the right to vote in this country seems to be the right not to vote.

During this period the Voting Rights Act was passed. Nearly every State moved to open up its registration procedures and add outreach processes as well. Five States now currently have no registration or Election Day registration. Even in spite of that the participation rates have gone down. Those States who have made their processes most open have also had declining participation rates.

Mr. Chairman, I am not sure that registration is particularly difficult or restrictive out there in the States, and yet, nevertheless, in our system I think we have to take every effort to make sure the system is as open as possible and is attractive to potential voters.

If we lived in a neutral world, it would be my inclination not to interfere in the State process, and for many years I have stood before this body and suggested we not do so. Now, however, I think we have made a very small step toward improving registration procedures, and I think it is worth the experiment.

I do want to make it clear that my support is not unconditioned. There are a lot of ways to ruin this bill on the way to enactment, and, if some of those ways slips in, particularly large amounts of money, I am going to slip out.

However, Mr. Chairman, I do want to say that it is time, after having wrestled with this problem for 20 years in this Congress, to make some very small improvements. The committee has wrestled in a very difficult thicket. I myself have labored on that committee in what some have considered durance vile for nearly two decades. We never produced something like this.

No, this is not perfect. Yes, it imposes on the States. Nevertheless it is a very small step to tell our citizens that we are trying to make it easier for them to vote.

Mr. Chairman, the bill deserves a chance. I intend to try to give it one.

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. DEFAZIO].

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I commend Chairman SWIFT for his perseverance in bringing the National Voter Registration Act to the floor for consideration. The ballot is the single most important tool citizens can use to influence our Government. Yet, voter participation in this country remains shamefully low. We must make it easier for individuals to register and stay registered to vote.

This bill will go a long way toward removing barriers that prevent and discourage citizens from participating in elections and exercising their franchise. Current voter registration procedures may not be as obviously discriminatory as the poll tax, literacy tests, and selective purges, but they are discriminatory.

The opponents of the bill say this legislation will result in voter fraud and an excessive financial and administrative burden on the States. That's simply not true.

We don't have a problem with people voting more than they should in elections. We have a serious problem with people not voting at all.

My home State of Oregon passed motor voter registration legislation last year. For a State with 2.5 million residents, the operating costs are estimated at about \$400,000 between 1989 and 1993.

But we shouldn't be afraid of increased voter participation. We have a responsibility to encourage people to vote. And to improve registration and access to the polls. This bill does that.

□ 1520

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Nevada [Mrs. VUCANOVICH], a member of the Committee on House Administration.

(Mrs. VUCANOVICH asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Mr. Chairman, while I would like to commend Mr. THOMAS and Mr. SWIFT for their dedication and many months of hard work on this legislation, I am convinced that H.R. 2190 is a classic example of good intentions gone bad.

The National Voter Registration Act would create a national system of voter registration procedures, which proponents argue, would increase the registration rolls. Under this premise, the proponents assume that increased registration will result in an increase in voter turnout. This goal is noble indeed, but H.R. 2190 will not achieve it. In the 1984 Presidential election, my State of Nevada registered 41.6 percent of all eligible voters and had a voter turnout rate of 80.4 percent. At the time of the 1988 Presidential election, motor voter was initiated and voter registration had indeed increased to 44.1 percent; unfortunately, the turnout rate dropped 3 percent. Additionally, a recent CBS-New York Times poll of nonvoters showed 97 percent of nonvoters gave reasons other than problems with the registration process. Further, 56 percent of those polled could not give a specific reason for not being registered or simply had no interest in the election. According to these figures, it is quite doubtful that a significant increase in voter turnout will result.

In a practical sense, the true cost of this measure is still unknown; in fact, State officials have indicated that it is possible that this initiative could run over \$1 billion. Presently, \$50 million would be authorized for H.R. 2190, however, CBO estimates that the real costs to the Federal Government would be \$200 million annually and direct costs to States and localities could be as much as \$90 million. I am concerned about the potential shortfall which would have to be made up by each State. Consequently, H.R. 2190 will take precious funding away from more important programs.

Serious fraud issues are also raised by this bill; it is in fact an invitation to voter fraud. H.R. 2190 requires mail registration without the benefit of notarization or signature verification. In addition, the measure does not allow purging of nonvoters from lists and more importantly, H.R. 2190 will replace all State voter fraud laws, regardless of whether the original law is able to grant the State better protection against fraud.

Make no mistake, I support motor voter registration and other voter outreach programs which will increase voter participation. However, I think that all of you will agree that each State has a separate and unique identity whose idiosyncrasies conform to the people who live there. States must have the freedom to design a system that takes these differences into account.

Mr. Chairman, Members, before you vote, read the bill and find out how it will affect your State. I firmly believe that this bill is costly, onerous, may increase voter fraud, and is simply unnecessary. H.R. 2190, the motor voter bill is a lemon, and I urge all Members to vote no on final passage.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington [Mr. MILLER], a member who has been very interested in the area of voter registration reform.

(Mr. MILLER of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Washington. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to start by thanking and commending my colleague, the gentleman from the State of Washington [Mr. SWIFT] for his herculean efforts in behalf of this legislation, and also I want to thank and commend my colleague, the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] for his incredible efforts.

Now, I understand there are some Members who are concerned that the rule on this legislation did not offer enough opportunity for amendments, and I sympathize with that and I support the effort to allow amendments.

I understand that there are some who believe that the antifraud provisions could be made tougher, and that is a commendable effort; but Mr. Chairman, let us make no mistake about this. This is a good piece of legislation.

In America, a paltry 61 percent of those eligible to vote do so. This in a country that is supposed to set an example of democracy around the world.

Mr. Chairman, more than 86 percent of those eligible to vote have a driver's license. Through the simple act of making it possible to register to vote while getting a driver's license we have the chance to improve our shameful voter turnout.

Eastern Europe is crying out for participatory democracies. This bill will increase participation in this democracy. Let us bring some of the voters back into the voting process.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2190.

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HAYES].

(Mr. HAYES of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYES of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 2190, legislation which seeks to expand the opportunities for eligible citizens to register to vote.

The National Voter Registration Act is a good starting point for addressing the need to make easier the process of voter registration. While the bill provides registration by mail as well as when applying for a driver's license, I am convinced that we can still do more.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization, I have introduced legislation which provides voter registration forms along with the change address form through the U.S. Postal Service, and which merely makes voter registration forms and information available in U.S. Postal facilities. It is my

hope that we will soon have an opportunity to consider other legislative initiatives so that we can continue efforts to remove barriers to voter participation. However, today we focus our attention on H.R. 2190.

Being an active member over the years of the Civil Rights and Labor Movements, I am keenly aware of those that literally died for the right to vote in this country. We must always remain very aware of the struggles set forth to enact the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and always be prepared to remove those barriers which prevent participation in this Nation's political process.

As we know Mr. Chairman, I represent a city that has on many occasions set forth serious barriers to voter registration and participation. I have witnessed massive purges of the rolls in Chicago, obviously making it extremely difficult to again reach a reasonable level of voter registrants. Thousands of black and hispanic voters are clearly lost through the purging process, yet today, some will tell you that we are not in need of a voter registration bill. H.R. 2190 clearly prohibits this kind of activity and we in Chicago need it.

I strongly believe that the cost of this bill will ultimately be nominal on the state-level, including the State of Illinois. We've already seen extremely low cost estimates out of States such as Michigan, Minnesota, and Nevada.

When we live in a country where one-third of the electorate—some 70 million people aren't registered to vote, we are in dire need of a legislative remedy. We are in need of uniform and nondiscriminatory voter registration laws, and therefore I encourage my colleagues' fervent support of H.R. 2190 as we vote today.

Mr. ROSTENKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman, reluctant as I am to vote against a bill crafted and supported by the Democratic leadership of the House, I will vote "no" on H.R. 2190, the National Voter Registration Act, on final passage. There are simply too many aspects of the bill which compel me to call for its reworking as opposed to its passage.

Primary among my concerns is that the bill could make it more difficult to prevent, detect, and prosecute voting fraud. No Federal court jurisdiction in America has devoted more Government resources to the elimination of voting fraud than the Northern District of Illinois. The cooperation of our local, State, and Federal authorities in establishing and maintaining anti-fraud practices and procedures is a promising and ongoing undertaking.

Unfortunately, some of the new mechanisms required by the bill, designed as they are to make registration easier and quicker, actually run counter to the direction of some of our most imaginative fraud prevention measures.

For example, a Federal grand jury which looked into alleged voting fraud

in Chicago has suggested the use of thumbprints on voter registration and ballot application forms, in addition to requirements already in place for authenticating signatures. The registration-by-mail provisions of the bill before the House actually would reduce the opportunities for checking even the signatures.

Second, but still very important to my State, the cost of implementing the bill is prohibitive. Since it would fall largely on State shoulders, I am certainly not surprised that we have heard cries of objection from our governors, secretaries of state, and boards of elections.

The Governor of Illinois estimates that the costs of implementing H.R. 2190 in my State alone would exceed \$37 million in the first year alone, to say nothing of the costs of maintaining and operating the new system in perpetuity.

Governor Thompson is hard-pressed to know where that money will come from, and he will find no comfort in turning to the U.S. Congress for help.

Finally, I have my own personal doubts whether a bill such as H.R. 2190 addresses the actual cause of low voter turnout.

We can relax the requirements for registration until it's like falling off a log. We can spend a lot of other governments' money on removing every conceivable obstacle between the voter and the polling booth. But if the voters do not believe they have a stake in the outcome of the contest or the results of the referendum, even letting them vote by fax will not bring the count up a great deal.

I commend my leaders and my other colleagues on a well-intentioned effort in bringing this legislation before the full body. Nevertheless, when every political leader in Illinois who has contacted me about this bill has urged me to vote against it, I have to take that into account.

Let's collect the most creative voter registration techniques from around the country and make news of them available to our State and local election officials.

Let's create incentives for the adoption and implementation of those proposals which, in the studied judgment of the local officials, address their specific needs.

And let's allow those jurisdictions who are pushing out the frontiers of anti-fraud and antidiscrimination programs to continue to lead the way, with our help.

Over and above that, we could do nothing more effective toward a better turnout on election day than doing our jobs honestly, creatively, and courageously. In that way only—as opposed to artificial substitutes—can we inspire new respect, new belief, and new interest in representative government on the part of our constituents. The future of democracy in this country depends on it.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. UPTON], a distinguished Member involved in a significant number of campaign finance reform areas.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Chairman, Michigan has employed much the same approach that this bill embodies today that is under debate this afternoon. In fact, approximately 800,000 voters take advantage of access to registration when they apply for or renew their drivers' licenses. The system runs at a cost that translates to about 13 cents per transaction. It works. The system has been found to be very successful. I have talked to a number of my county and township clerks over the last 10 days or so, and they are very proud of the system that they have, because they know that is performance has done very well.

Michigan has an excellent record in its conduct of registrations and elections.

The motor-voter registration works.

Now, the question is often asked, is this an unreasonable Federal intrusion into State functions? Well, we are not trying to run the elections of the Federal Government. We are only trying to establish a reasonable national standard providing greater access to registration. That is what this debate should center on. States still have the power to improve their system if they so desire.

As I indicated, this works for Michigan. In fact, in Michigan where they have already begun to embark on a computerization program that should be completed by the midnineties, they are going to have to roll that up a little bit earlier so that they can complete that earlier than they had originally anticipated, but it is not going to be a problem. In fact, with the Federal incentive now that will provide some funds for that, as it will to all 50 States, Michigan is in a good position. This is good politics and it is good policy. I urge the Congress to adopt this measure.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield briefly?

Mr. UPTON. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMAS of California. It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that Michigan has the so-called motor-voter.

Mr. UPTON. We do have it.

Mr. THOMAS of California. And you are not computerized?

Mr. UPTON. It is not computerized at this moment, though there are steps to do so in the next couple of years.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Some of our colleagues are concerned about the fact that the bill does not mandate computerization. The gentleman has found that the Michigan experience has been a successful one, even though Michigan at this time is not computerized?

Mr. UPTON. That is correct. It has been a very successful program without a computerization mandate. I can tell the gentleman from personal experience as one who has moved from a township to the city in the last couple years, it works wonderfully.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. McMILLEN].

(Mr. McMILLEN of Maryland asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McMILLEN of Maryland. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support of H.R. 2190, the National Voter Registration bill. I believe that this legislation is vital to improving the numbers of registered voters in this country. While the legislation does not include portions of a bill which I introduced last year, the Jury Selection and Voter Participation Act of 1989, it is my hope that in the near future the merits of my legislation will be considered.

It is essential, in a democracy, that juries be composed of people who represent a cross section of the community. This is an issue of fairness and of individual rights under our constitutional form of government. At the same time, it is inappropriate that only those citizens who are registered to vote or who actually vote are selected to serve on juries. Service on a jury should be viewed as an essential component of responsible citizenship. Further, it is fundamentally important for citizens to participate in a democratic form of government. The way for citizens in a democracy to participate is with their votes. Unfortunately, our most recent election marked a new low in the level of voter participation. Our Nation is the greatest democracy in history. At the same time, the level of voter registration and participation in the United States is nothing short of abysmal, particularly when compared to other western, industrialized democracies. I am convinced—based not so much on findings explained in volumes of studies and reports, but on my own, often casual conversations with local elected officials, elections and voter registration officials, and ordinary, everyday people—that many Americans do not register to vote because they do not want to serve on juries. In this country, people who have not registered to vote because of a fear of jury service have articulated concerns about inconvenience, including the actual time involved and lost work, expense, and a general reluctance to become involved. It is clear that people who do not want to serve on juries, do not register to vote. By not voting, these people are not exercising an important right denied to so many others in the world. Again—and this is a point that deserves to be stressed—in a democratic system of government, it is imperative that juries are a representative cross section of the community. If the possibility of serving on juries is a disincentive to people who want to vote and participate in our elections, we should remove this disincentive. The legislation I introduced would amend the way that the clerks of the Federal district courts develop rolls of those eligible for jury duty. My bill would require the use of substitutes, specifically information compiled by the Social Security Administration

and the Internal Revenue Service, for voter registration lists or the lists of actual voters. In addition, my bill recommends that the States develop their own lists of prospective jurors that are not based on voter registration lists or lists of actual voters. The States should use other sources for compiling names of those to serve on State juries, including records of motor vehicle licenses and registrations, lists of utility customers, and State or local income tax returns. All citizens, age 18 or older, should be eligible for jury service. We all benefit from the freedoms and rights of American citizens. Thus, all citizens shall contribute to those freedoms and rights by serving on juries, if called. The selection process should not be dependent on identifying prospective jurors based on whether or not a person has exercised his or her right to vote.

□ 1530

Mr. SWIFT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST].

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2190. The need for this legislation is very clear. Voter turnout in our elections is at an embarrassingly low level. The United States has the worst voting participation rate of the world's major democracies.

Why is this the case? Let us examine the facts. In the last Presidential election only 50 percent of the people of voting age in the United States actually voted. The fault lies in the staggering number of unregistered Americans. Over 80 percent of the registered voters in our country vote in Presidential elections by only 61 percent of the voting age population is actually registered to vote. Let me say that again. Only 61 percent of the voting age population is actually registered to vote. If you are not registered, you can not vote. So let us make it easier to register and then maybe we will not be in last place in turnout anymore.

There are 21 States where less than 70 percent of the voting age population is registered. These States are as follows: Arizona, 69 percent; Arkansas, 68 percent; California, 67 percent; Delaware, 65 percent; Florida, 63 percent; Georgia, 63 percent; Hawaii, 54 percent; Kansas, 69 percent; Maryland, 66 percent; Nevada, 57 percent; New Jersey, 67 percent; New Mexico, 61 percent; New York, 64 percent; North Carolina, 69.8 percent; Pennsylvania, 65 percent; South Carolina, 52 percent; Tennessee, 66 percent; Texas, 67 percent; Virginia, 63 percent; West Virginia, 69 percent; and Wyoming, 64 percent.

H.R. 2190 seeks to provide uniform national standards for voter registration laws and to do so in a manner that makes it easy for all eligible citizens to register and that guards against voter fraud.

H.R. 2190 requires that all States establish procedures permitting people

to register to vote by mail. A total of 26 States currently have registration by mail, and the system has worked well in those States. H.R. 2190 also requires States to provide for automatic voter registration when someone completes an application for a driver's license. This is an innovative approach already in use in some States. It is estimated that linking voter registration with the application for a driver's license would reach about 90 percent of the voting age population.

This legislation represents change, and change is never easy, particularly for the local elections officials who must administer the system. However, we can not let resistance to change prevent us from becoming a better Democracy. I urge you to join me in supporting H.R. 2190.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California [Mr. CAMPBELL].

(Mr. CAMPBELL of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Chairman, I cannot support the proposed National Voter Registration bill, H.R. 2190, because I sincerely believe it to be unconstitutional. This is regrettable, because the purposes of the bill are, generally, laudable. However, the Constitution gives to the States and not to the Federal Government, the obligation to set qualifications for eligibility to vote in Federal elections. Here are the constitutional provisions for elections for President, Representatives, and Senators.

The Constitution provides the following for setting qualifications for voters for Representatives:

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Article I, section 2: The Constitution provides the following for setting qualifications for voters for Senators:

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

The 17th amendment (1913): Note this provision was adopted after the 14th amendment—making it very hard to argue the 14th amendment takes the power away from the States when the 17th amendment gave the power to the States.

The Constitution provides the following for setting qualifications for the Presidential electors:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress. . . .

Article II, section 1: Finally, the Constitution provides for the following explicit congressional authority in the area of elections:

The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators.

Article I, section 4: To say who may vote is not to prescribe times, places, or manner of elections. It is to set eligibility requirements—and, hence, it is reserved to the States.

In 1970, in Oregon versus Mitchell, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld, 5 to 4, the Federal law to compel States to allow 18 year olds to vote in Federal elections. Despite the foregoing clear provision of the Constitution, the Supreme Court held that the 14th amendment, section 5, gave the Congress the necessary authority—as part of the general guarantee of "due process" and "equal protection." Assuming that case, Oregon versus Mitchell, would be decided the same way today, there is a difference. To draft young Americans to fight and possibly die at 18, but deny them the right to vote, might well have been a violation of due process, of equal protection. That is not the case with the provisions of this bill, however. These provisions deal with the ordinary aspects of who shall be eligible to vote—which provisions are left to the States. Many have called for judges to interpret the Constitution according to original intent. Many call for conservative judges, who will apply the provisions of the Constitution rather than add their own meaning to them. To these, I ask: How can you support a congressional bill premised on a power not given to Congress—indeed, explicitly given to the States? If you were the kind of judge you would want the President to appoint, you would strike down this law. You ought not support it as a Member of Congress.

Mr. THOMAS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the more than distinguished gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], a member of the Committee on House Administration, a member of the Subcommittee on Elections, and a watchdog for the public.

(Mr. ROBERTS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by saying that I do not know of any Member of this Congress who opposes the intent of this bill, and if I can really personalize those remarks further, we do not really question the intent, not to mention the hard work of the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. SWIFT], and our ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS].

The motor voter trail, if you will, has been long and arduous for both gentlemen, but I hasten to add, however, that as a member of the subcommittee, I never really signed on with this posse to increase voter turnout by mandating Federal registration and costs and regulation and hoops and hurdles upon our State and our local election officers and that whole

system. We are concerned about what lurks under the banner of reform and the law of unintended effects.

We believe that voter turnout is important, but not at the expense of integrity, the sanctity and the workability of the entire election process. Much has been said about costs and the cost estimates ranging from \$10 million to \$200 million and down the road, and if we stop to figure in the cost to apply this mandate to State and local elections, and that is what will happen, States will not simply finance one system for Federal candidates and another for State and local; it could even reach \$1 billion.

There will be gasps of feigned astonishment from those who are proponents of this bill, but that is the case. The General Accounting Office, when trying to figure out what the costs would be, simply threw up its hands and said it was impossible.

We have heard a great deal about fraud in this debate, and the proponents state that new Federal authority will add a new layer of protection. We have had lengthy staff meetings, lengthy questions about proof of citizenship, notarization for postcard registration, the purge of nonvoters, putting State and Federal employees in the position of being elections officers. Needless to say, these concerns remain.

Finally let me say that my biggest concern is the Federal intrusion in the local and State election process and the compliance chaos that will result in regard to cost reforms, duplication, fraud, and election integrity.

Today perception is reality. We hear that if we simply increase voter registration by automatically registering everybody who has a driver's license or everybody who walks in to see the friendly folks where one gets their hunting license, the fishing license, marriage license, the friendly folks at the welfare office, the unemployment office, the post office, the school, yes, the ASCS office in farm country, then if we make them all election officials, then we save democracy and voter turnout.

Reality: this is going to turn our election process upside down.

In closing, let me simply say that we agree with the increased goal of increased voter participation and registration, but we do not agree that this mandated Federal approach is the right answer. Later in the debate, we will have an appropriate alternative that will, in fact, increase voter registration but also safeguard the integrity of the election process.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally in order that the House may receive a message.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES of Illinois) assumed the chair.