

State of South Carolina

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March 28, 2007

Honorable J. Gresham Barrett
United States House of Representatives
1523 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Barrett:

The South Carolina State Election Commission is requesting your opposition to H.R.811 and S.559 as well as other legislation that would require dramatic changes in state and local election laws, technology and procedures. The requirements of H.R.811 and S.559 are impractical, unnecessary and the deadlines are unrealistic. This legislation, if enacted, would:

- Erode the integrity of the voting process and diminish voter confidence;
- Rush new voting technology to market without testing or certification, and without adequate time for poll worker training and voter education;
- Exacerbate the spiral of escalating election administration costs;
- Undermine existing efforts by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Election Assistance Commission to develop meaningful federal standards for voting equipment and provide for independent testing and certification of voting systems.

In 2004, South Carolina began the implementation of a statewide electronic voting system. Building on over 20 years experience using electronic voting systems, the implementation was extremely successful and we enjoy a high level of voter confidence in the election process. Based on our experience, we respectfully request your opposition to H.R.811 and S. 559 for the following reasons:

1. The State of South Carolina will expend a considerable amount of time and money to physically retro fit its new statewide voting system that meets the requirements of HAVA.
2. H.R.811 will disenfranchise disabled South Carolina voters. Voters with disabilities will no longer be able to cast a ballot in secret.
3. The State of South Carolina currently utilizes a paper audit trail with the new statewide electronic voting system. County election officials may review this audit trail and verify the outcome of an election.

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4. VVPAT is a relatively new technology that has not been thoroughly tested and implemented. Several states and counties that use this technology have been dismayed by its reliability. Many election officials using VVPAT feel it does not provide an accurate audit of an election.
5. VVPAT may negatively impact lines at polling places contributing to voter apathy and low voter confidence in the process.

We welcome federal lawmakers' interest in strengthening the integrity and accessibility of our most democratic institution. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the election process in South Carolina.

Sincerely,

Marci Andino
Executive Director

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