



March 14, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges you to **oppose H.R. 811 and S. 559**. This legislation would require the use of a so-called 'voter-verified permanent paper ballot' in combination with experimental new ballot scanning technology in each polling place; mandate a hand count of ballots in up to 10 percent of polling places in each state; prohibit certification of election results until completion of a lengthy audit process; and make numerous other substantial revisions to the Help America Vote Act. The NACo Board of Directors unanimously adopted the following resolution on March 5, 2007:

"The National Association of Counties (NACo) affirms that responsibility for the conduct and accompanied cost of elections is historically that of state and county governments throughout America. Ensuring the accuracy and integrity of that process is a critical responsibility of county officials. NACo opposes H.R. 811 and other legislation that impose very specific and often impractical requirements regarding equipment, procedures and personnel responsibilities under unrealistic deadlines that offer little or no improvement in election administration and would clearly violate principles of cost versus benefit ratio.

NACo seeks maximum opportunities to present concerns to Congress on any federal legislation.

Voluntary standards for voting equipment and procedures must precede any implementation deadline by at least 2 to 3 years."

The requirements of H.R. 811 and S. 559 are impractical; 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 pollworker training and voter education;
- Exacerbate the spiral of escalating election administration costs that, for many counties, have doubled or even tripled in the last five years; and
- 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.

County officials welcome federal lawmakers' interest in strengthening the integrity and accessibility of our most basic democratic institution. We look forward to working with you to address the myriad challenges facing county officials in this environment of unprecedented change in election technology rather than exacerbating these challenges by enacting legislation such as H.R. 811. I encourage you to contact Alysoun McLaughlin at 202-942-4254 or amclaughlin@naco.org. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue facing the nation's counties.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry E. Naake". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry E. Naake
Executive Director