

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2126, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-214), on the resolution (H. Res. 205) providing for consideration of bill (H.R. 2126) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE PROBLEM OF ELECTION FRAUD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. EHRLICH] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about two issues. One concerns the integrity of the electoral process, and in that respect, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Maryland gubernatorial election, November 8, 1994.

After my brief comments on that, I am going to engage my fine colleague from Indiana, Mr. MCINTOSH, concerning the issue of grant reform.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I get to that, I wanted to talk about the hearings this past week that the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight conducted with respect to vote fraud in America, geared primarily to the Federal motor-voter law.

Officials and advocates from around the country speak of abuses and misconduct that occurred during the balloting process. In California, Mr. Speaker, witnesses testified that noncitizens regularly voted, as did a 5-year-old child and a dog.

In Alabama, witnesses reported three briefcases containing 1,100 completed absentee ballots where hand-carried to an election board on election day. These, and similar incidents, Mr. Speaker, impugn the integrity of this country's electoral process.

This issue is particularly important to me in light of allegations of election abuse and official misconduct in Maryland during the general election of November 1994. That election, the gubernatorial election, Mr. Speaker, was decided by a very slim margin of several thousands vote. Concerned citizens from around the State began to investigate widespread reports of irregularities in the days following the election.

Besides problems with extremely lax voting security, Mr. Speaker, these investigations determined that 34,000 voters were not purged in Baltimore City in 1994 prior to the election as required by State law.

The Baltimore City elections supervisor was reminded by a deputy 7 months prior to the election that the

purge had not been conducted. It was never done and that fact appears, at least at this point in time, to have been concealed from city and State election officials. The enormous implications of this official problem, I will characterize it, is apparent from the following sample facts about the November election in Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, a computer analysis done of total vote counts for each of the 408 precincts in Baltimore City using the Baltimore City Election Board electronic tape of registered voters and the certified list of votes cast on election day forwarded to the State Board of Elections revealed, Mr. Speaker, 5,929 more votes were cast in the election than individuals recorded as having appeared to have voted at the polls or by absentee ballot; 5929, Mr. Speaker.

Another analysis was done comparing the same electronic tape of registered voters in Baltimore City with thousands of abandoned houses provided by the city housing commission. This revealed a total of 667 votes cast in the election.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, 1,881 votes were cast from houses owned either by the mayor and city council of Baltimore or the city housing authority. There is compelling evidence, Mr. Speaker, that a total of potentially as many as 2,548 votes were cast from abandoned or unoccupied buildings in that election.

Where did these voters live, Mr. Speaker? Was there a direct correlation between the failure to purge and these terrible statistics? I think that there was. So did State Election Board officials. After these facts, and others, Mr. Speaker, were discovered the State election board made a bipartisan call for the purge to be conducted after the fact to prove that mistakes had been made.

Let me reiterate, the State Board of Elections, consisting of three Democrats and three Republicans, wanted the purge to be done to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future.

Instead, the State Attorney General's office represented the city election board against the State Election Board and convinced the court to retroactively apply the Federal motor-voter law in order to prevent any purges from being conducted. This is not the original purpose of the Federal motor-voter law, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, we in Congress are, and should be, concerned that similar problems are not repeated in other States.

Problems such as those encountered in Maryland should be corrected immediately. Vigorous investigation must be conducted to determine if there was any fraud or official misconduct or simple negligence in that election that affected the outcome, Mr. Speaker.

If there is evidence of such behavior, it should be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible. It should not and must not be condoned or ignored using the cloak of law applied retroactively.

Mr. Speaker, In conclusion, in an election there is no such thing as a little fraud or a little problem. Such behavior attacks the very foundation of our society, because it destroys the fundamental trust between the voters, our constituents, and their government. This during a time, Mr. Speaker, when we are attempting to get more people to vote and we are having problems, as you well know.

To tolerate such abuse or circumvent the laws of the land designated to protect the sanctity of the citizen's right to vote by any means possible, will only make Americans more cynical and more disinterested in this process. In Maryland, we must not let this situation happen again.

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments with respect to the integrity of the voting process. You very well know I feel very strongly about this, because of in my view some of the substantiated allegations concerning events surrounding the general election in Maryland in November.

GRANT REFORM

Mr. Speaker, there is another issue that is coming to this floor next week, and I rise to engage my friend and colleague and chairman, Mr. MCINTOSH from Indiana, in a colloquy about grant reform. Before I get into grant reform, Mr. Speaker, I would like the country to know of Mr. MCINTOSH's leadership on this issue.

I truly appreciate the leadership you have shown, Mr. MCINTOSH, my colleague and friend, concerning this very important issue and I know you have introductory comments to make.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Thank you very much, Mr. EHRLICH. I appreciate those kind remarks. Your leadership on this issue has been equally important for us. When I came here last January as a freshman, I did not have any idea that there was some vicious little cycle that was going on. It is one of Washington's best-kept secrets: That we give out billions of dollars in grants to entities that are supposed to be helping the poor, helping us clean up the environment, providing a solution to many of our social problems, but those entities take this Federal money and use it to help subsidize an incredibly extensive lobbying and political network. That political network comes back and lobbies for more spending, and so you get this vicious cycle here in Washington.

As I say, it is one of those secrets that they have tried to keep from the American people.

When I go home to my district in Indiana and I tell people what we have uncovered here in the subcommittee, and we have had two hearings on it already and plan to have more hearings in the future, they are shocked. They say, I do not believe that is happening. And when you show them the documented evidence, they are outraged that their taxpayer dollars are being used to subsidize this type of lobbying and political activity.