

have considered this an important challenge, and I hope by October 1st we will finish our work and finish it together and have a bill, not for partisanship, but for all Americans, to protect the civil rights of all Americans.

□ 1630

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), for bringing this to our attention. I have a very short comment to make. Number one, it is time, regarding the instructions she has given to the conferees, it is time we had fair voting in Florida. It is time we not depend on the machine. We need leadership. The Governor of Florida, the Dade County Elections Commission, none of them have acted in good faith. We need this. We need the Federal Government to come in and say, look, we want a fair election. It is time for one. We cannot pass the buck. Even with the machines, if we do not have the proper leadership to direct this, it cannot run in the right way.

We know that Florida has been cheated, we know that this country has been cheated, so I will not stand here and make allowances for anyone. We need this instruction that the good Congresswoman has passed on to the conferees. It is time that they listen for once and pass this and make sense when they do it and not look for some bipartisan kind of thing that is going to please everybody. Please the American public. Please the people who work so hard for the vote. Please the people who died for the vote. So I make no amends for any of them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this Motion to Instruct the Election Reform Conferees to produce a Conference Report before October 1, 2002, and I commend my good friend Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS for offering it.

Mr. Speaker, election reform is long overdue. How many more election day catastrophes, like last week's voting in Florida, will be required for this Congress to get the message that our people need a real election reform bill and they need it now?! I don't have the time to detail all of the problems that occurred in last week's voting in South Florida, but the problems were extremely serious.

I have read the same newspaper and magazine accounts that all of you have read suggesting that the election reform conferees have not yet been able to work out their differences, and that election reform may be dead for this Session of Congress. Mr. Speaker, this outcome is absolutely unacceptable. This Congress will have failed the American people if it does not pass a strong election reform Conference Report, and send it to the President for his signature before this Session ends.

Mr. Speaker, last week's voting revealed that the many problems that plagued the 2000 Presidential election in South Florida are con-

tinuing. I didn't just hear about the problems from my constituents. I experienced some of the problems myself.

Miami-Dade County allowed early voting in advance of the September 10th primary. Yet when I stopped by a library branch in my precinct to cast an early vote, I was delayed from voting for more than 30 minutes because the only computer available was not working and the election officials on duty said that they couldn't verify that I was an eligible voter!

Even though I presented my driver's license, my new voter registration card and other photo identification, I still was not allowed to vote for over thirty minutes while poll workers attempted to check Election Department records to verify my eligibility.

While these poll workers tried to follow new Miami-Dade procedures to contact the main elections office in the case of a computer glitch, they were unable to contact the Elections Supervisor to verify my eligibility. During this thirty minute period, I saw at least two voters who wanted to vote early leave the polling place without voting.

As all of you know, I'm not easily deterred, especially when my rights are being threatened, so even though I was extremely unhappy with the Department's inability to verify my eligibility during this delay, I did not leave the polling place. Instead, I had my District Office contact the County Elections Supervisor and his staff. While I did not speak with the Election Supervisor himself, I understand that Elections Department staff advised that the Elections Supervisor checked the department's records personally to verify my eligibility, and then the poll workers were told which absentee ballot I should be given.

Mr. Speaker, if a Senior Member of Congress with a long history of voting in each election, and someone who knows how to assert herself, had this type of problem when trying to vote, all of us know the problems that new or infrequent voters, or those voters who speak a different language such as Haitians, are facing.

Mr. Speaker, we can and must do better than this. We need to fund the best election technology available and make it available on an equal basis to all of our communities. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we need more than just new and fancy machines. We need to ensure that our poll workers are properly trained in how to operate those machines, and in election law and procedure. Those workers also must share a commitment to seeing to it that all of our people have an equal chance to vote and to have their vote counted. In short, Mr. Speaker, our elections officials must do more to make real election reform a reality for all of our people.

Mr. Speaker, we must not forget the lessons of the 2000 election, and last week's Florida fiasco. None of us can rest until we ensure that every vote counts and is counted. I urge all of my Colleagues to support the Waters Motion to Instruct Conferees, commend Congresswoman WATERS for offering it, and yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

Elections are the heart of our democracy. We cannot afford to allow another Federal election to come and go without addressing the myriad problems in our election system. We must complete action on election reform legislation. We must complete it before

we adjourn for the November election. It is time for Congress to assure the American people that every vote will count in the United States of America.

We do this for all of America, but African Americans are particularly sensitive on this subject, because we fought so hard for the right to vote. I can tell my colleagues in that election where we saw a database identifying so-called felons where people who had never been arrested in their lives found themselves on that list, where people could not cast their vote because they could not find their names on the polls, it was reflections of yesteryear by a different name. We have our forefathers and foremothers who were made to pay poll taxes, who were intimidated, who were forced to have to read the Constitution in order to prove their literacy. We cannot afford to have America not fix this election system that is obviously broken and has been demonstrated to be such.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this motion and tell the conferees to complete their work before October 1.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

A POLITICAL MISTAKE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I have for years advocated a moral and constitutional approach to our foreign policy.