

INTEGRITY IN VOTER
REGISTRATION ACT

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Integrity in Voter Registration Act. Unfortunately, the issue of voter registration and the integrity of our election system sometimes goes overlooked. Indeed, the issue of who may vote and where they may do it is at the very heart of our democratic system. Preserving the integrity of this process is critical. But, there is significant evidence that vote fraud is not a rare occurrence.

There is a much bigger picture involving voter fraud that we do not always read about. However, I would recommend to my colleagues that they read a well-written book, "Dirty Little Secrets," by Larry J. Sabato and Glenn R. Simpson. Mr. Sabato is a well respected political scientist at the University of Virginia and Mr. Simpson used to work for the bi-weekly paper on Capitol Hill, Roll Call. These two authors tackle numerous topics, including voter fraud. And it's scary.

Vote fraud issues include dead people voting, people being able to game the system and lousy verification procedures. The tale of how a person was able to register his dog by mail is one of my favorites.

The election registration process is generally handled at the state level. However, Congress asserted itself quite boldly when we passed the so-called "motor-voter" registration legislation, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. This legislation requires states to establish motor registration procedures for federal elections so that eligible citizens may apply to register to vote (1) simultaneously with applying for a driver's license, (2) by mail, and (3) at selected state and local offices that serve the public. I certainly have no problem with making it easier for people to register to vote. Of course, if someone would not take the time to register to vote prior to the change, I question whether he or she would actually vote once registered, but that debate has already been had.

The question we must now face deal with the potential for fraud in voter registration. To quote Sabato and Simpson, "[v]oting fraud is back, is becoming more serious with each passing election cycle, and soon—because of the recent changes in the law—is destined to become even worse." The reason why motor-voter will make voting fraud an issue that we will not be able to ignore is the same reason why the bill was so popular: it makes it easier to register to vote. Any one of my colleagues could sit at home and mail in voter registration cards with different addresses with little problem. I could even register my dog. As I said, it's been done.

To relate this another way, when I am back home doing precinct walks, my campaign will purchase voter rolls and have them sorted by household. In the past, there used to be a few duplicates or outdated names on the list, but nothing overwhelming. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to see several different names listed for one address. These people may or may

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not have really lived at the address given, but certainly not all of them are living there now. The rolls are filled with outdated names and addresses. It is no longer an error here, an outdated address there. To put it in fiscal terms, in California alone, "deadwood" voters cause state and local governments to waste \$5 to \$8 million of taxpayers' money printing and mailing voter pamphlets, unneeded ballots, and the like.

The more we allow our voting rolls to get out of hand, the less secure our election system will be. Some of this can be done locally by improving databases or centralizing the system. However, the federal government can also allow state and local governments to use a few tools at absolutely no cost to the taxpayer. This is what my legislation aims to do.

Mr. Speaker, the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections came to me toward the end of the 104th Congress with suggestions as to how the federal government can assist them in doing their jobs. I have turned their suggestions into the Integrity in Voter Registration Act. First, this bill would require applicants registering to vote in federal elections to provide their Social Security numbers. Second, a state would be allowed to remove a registrant's name from the list of eligible voters if the registrant has not voted in two consecutive federal general elections after having received a notice requesting confirmation of the registrant's address.

The Social Security number requirement would allow each person to have a unique identifier with their name. It would make it easier to spot duplicate registrations. The notification requirement gives guidance to states since federal law is currently a bit vague.

Mr. Speaker, this proposal was given to me by the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections and I have gotten letters from other people outside of Florida, including Texas and Illinois. These two changes would go a long way toward helping keep the voter rolls clean. Surely this is no silver bullet. Nothing is. But this proposal would make a serious dent in duplicative and sometimes fraudulent registrations, ensuring the integrity of our electoral system. I urge my colleagues to support the Integrity in Voter Registration Act.

THE CIDCARE ACT

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing CIDCARE, in an effort to effectively stimulate the demand for higher quality care for our Nation's children while simultaneously removing barriers and providing resources to improve the quality of child care in the United States.

Child care continues to be a worry for most families as stories continue to surface about the lack of quality child care. Moreover, research has clearly demonstrated that a high-quality child care program is one that makes the healthy development and education of children its first objective and strives to stimulate the learning process of all children through de-

velopmentally appropriate activities that foster social, emotional, and intellectual growth. In addition, families in today's society are increasingly required to have both parents enter the work force. The demand for quality child care is increasing as is the need for credentialed and accredited child care providers.

Accordingly, CIDCARE will stimulate the demand for higher quality child care for our Nation's children while simultaneously removing barriers and providing resources to improve the quality of child care in the United States.

Many of my colleagues may have read about the tragic circumstances surrounding the Fiedelhotz family in Florida. The Fiedelhotz' son Jeremy died after only 2 hours at a day care facility. Through this tragedy should have never happened, it is an unfortunate example of what can and may continue to happen unless we encourage and inform all parents about the need for accredited and credentialed child care providers and facilities.

CIDCARE through the Tax Code will encourage the demand for accredited or credentialed child care. This will be accomplished in the following manner: First, by increasing the amount which an employee can contribute to a dependent care assistance plan if a child is in accredited or credentialed child care; second, changing the dependent care tax credit to allow parents to receive a higher and more equitable dependent day care credit; third, providing tax benefits for employers which provide quality child care; fourth, extending eligibility for businesses to take a qualified charitable deduction for the donation of educational equipment and materials to public schools, accredited or credentialed nonprofit child care providers; fifth, establishing a \$260 million competitive grant program to assist States in improving the quality of child care; sixth, expanding public information and technical assistance services to identify and disseminate to the public what is important for child development in child care; seventh, providing \$50 million to create and operate a technology-based training infrastructure to enable child care providers nationwide to receive the training, education, and support they need to improve the quality of child care; eighth, creating a child care training revolving fund to enable child care providers and child care support entities to purchase computers, satellite dishes, and other technological equipment which enable them to participate in the child care training provided on the national infrastructure; ninth, requiring that all Federal child care centers will have to meet all State and local licensing and other regulatory requirements related to the provision of child care, within 6 months of the passage of this legislation; and tenth, extending the Perkins and Stafford Loan Forgiveness Program to include child care workers who are employed full time providing child care services and have a degree in early childhood education or development or receive professional child care credentials.

I urge all of my colleagues to review this bill and to join me in cosponsoring this important measure. Our children are our future and we insist that they receive the best care possible, especially during their early development years.