

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 685

Designating the last week of September 2008 as “National Voter Awareness Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 25 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 17), 2008

Mr. BROWN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating the last week of September 2008 as “National Voter Awareness Week”.

Whereas the Framers of the Constitution established the United States as a representative democracy, with the fundamental principle of civic engagement on the part of all eligible citizens;

Whereas an essential element of an effective democracy is the ability of each eligible and qualified citizen to be able to vote in fair and open elections;

Whereas Congress has passed important election laws such as the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA—Motor Voter Act), and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, dedicated to increasing the transparency of the election process,

strengthening our voting systems, and protecting the right of all citizens to vote;

Whereas the 26th amendment of the Constitution requires that “the right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on the account of age”;

Whereas Minnesota, Maine, New Hampshire, Idaho, Wisconsin, and Wyoming allow same day registration of voters at the polls, and also experience the highest voter turnout rates in the country;

Whereas most States have 30-day voter registration deadlines, and the public must be informed of their local and State election laws in September in order to participate fully in the Federal elections in November;

Whereas experts estimate that more than 20 percent of voters nationwide will cast their ballots before election day by mail or at early-voting locations, a proportion of the electorate that is rising with each election;

Whereas many election officials note that early voting is convenient for voters, increases turnout, and reduces the strain on polling places and poll workers on election day;

Whereas, according to the Fair Vote Center for Voting and Democracy, voter turnout in the United States is lower than in most other developed nations, with the United States coming 20th out of 21 in voter turnout among established democracies; and

Whereas S. 1901, introduced in the 102nd Congress, would have amended section 6103 of title 5, United States Code, to establish Democracy Day as a legal public holiday on election day, in recognition of the need for in-

creased participation of an educated electorate to preserve the legitimacy of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates the last week of September 2008
3 as “National Voter Awareness Week”;

4 (2) calls upon the people of the United States
5 to observe such a week with appropriate programs
6 and activities, including helping State and local in-
7 stitutions deliver sample ballots, voter registration
8 forms, absentee ballots, and other educational mate-
9 rials to all eligible voters; and

10 (3) encourages all grassroots organizations and
11 educational, cultural, and community institutions to
12 promote voter awareness and registration programs
13 that befit local election procedure.

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