

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 40

Expressing the sense of the Congress that national news organizations should refrain from projecting the winner of a Presidential election until all of the polls in the Continental United States have closed.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 27, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that national news organizations should refrain from projecting the winner of a Presidential election until all of the polls in the Continental United States have closed.

Whereas voter participation is vital to a healthy democracy;

Whereas every eligible American should be encouraged to vote;

Whereas events and actions that may discourage individuals from voting should be avoided whenever possible;

Whereas there is a clear consensus that in Presidential elections, news organization projections of the winner in certain States can affect voter turnout in other States where the polls have not yet closed;

Whereas, on election night in 1980, network news organizations announced that their projections showed that Ronald Reagan had won a sufficient number of States to win the Presidential election well before the polls closed on the west coast;

Whereas numerous studies have concluded that those projections discouraged individuals in Western States from voting, and may have reduced voter turnout in California by more than two percent;

Whereas there is widespread agreement that early projections of the Presidential election in 1980 affected numerous Congressional, State, and local races in Western States;

Whereas, on election night in 2000, all of the major news organizations announced that their projections showed that Vice President Al Gore had won the State of Florida prior to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time;

Whereas these projections of one of the most decisive States in the Presidential election came more than three hours before polls closed on the west coast, and roughly ten minutes before the polls closed in several counties in the panhandle of Florida itself;

Whereas these projections were found to be erroneous and had to be retracted;

Whereas later projections that George W. Bush had won the State of Florida were also retracted;

Whereas early projections again appear to have discouraged voter turnout in many Western States; and

Whereas these early projections again likely affected many closely contested Congressional, State, and local elections in Western States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that na-
3 tional news organizations should, through a voluntary, in-
4 dustry-wide agreement, refrain from reporting projections
5 of the winner of a Presidential election, or the winner of
6 any State in a Presidential election, until all the polls have
7 closed in the Continental United States.

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