

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 561

To establish the Bipartisan Commission on Election Reform to study and make recommendations on issues affecting the conduct and administration of elections in the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2001

Mr. DINGELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the Bipartisan Commission on Election Reform to study and make recommendations on issues affecting the conduct and administration of elections in the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Election Reform Com-
5 mission Act of 2001”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

2 There is hereby established a commission to be known
3 as the Bipartisan Commission on Election Reform (here-
4 after in this Act referred to as the “Commission”).

5 **SEC. 3. MEMBERSHIP.**

6 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
7 shall be composed of 17 members who shall be appointed
8 as follows:

9 (1) 4 members shall be appointed by the Presi-
10 dent, of whom not more than 2 may be affiliated
11 with the same political party.

12 (2) 3 members shall be appointed by the major-
13 ity leader of the Senate.

14 (3) 3 members shall be appointed by the minor-
15 ity leader of the Senate.

16 (4) 3 members shall be appointed by the Speak-
17 er of the House of Representatives.

18 (5) 3 members shall be appointed by the minor-
19 ity leader of the House of Representatives.

20 (6) 1 member (who shall serve as the Chair of
21 the Commission) shall be appointed jointly by the
22 President, the majority leader of the Senate, the mi-
23 nority leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the
24 House of Representatives, and the minority leader of
25 the House of Representatives.

1 (b) TERMS.—Members of the Commission shall be
2 appointed not later than 30 days after the date of enact-
3 ment of this Act. Appointments shall be for the life of the
4 Commission.

5 (c) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall
6 not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same man-
7 ner as the original appointment.

8 (d) MEETINGS.—

9 (1) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days
10 after the date on which all members of the Commis-
11 sion have been appointed, the Commission shall hold
12 its first meeting.

13 (2) ADDITIONAL MEETINGS.—The Commission
14 shall meet at the call of the Chair or a majority of
15 its members.

16 (e) QUORUM.—A majority of the Commission shall
17 constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

18 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall examine
20 issues affecting the conduct and administration of elec-
21 tions for Federal, State, and local offices in the United
22 States and make recommendations on its findings.

23 (b) SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED.—Among
24 other issues the Commission determines are relevant, the

1 Commission shall examine and make recommendations on
2 the following issues:

3 (1) ELECTORAL COLLEGE.—Issues relating to
4 the electoral college, including its impact on voter
5 turnout and alternative methods of allocating elec-
6 toral votes among candidates.

7 (2) VOTER REGISTRATION.—Issues relating to
8 voter registration, including the impact and effec-
9 tiveness of the National Voter Registration Act of
10 1993, the feasibility and effectiveness of permitting
11 voter registration on the day of an election, and the
12 feasibility and effectiveness of permitting voter reg-
13 istration through the use of the Internet.

14 (3) BALLOT DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY.—
15 Issues relating to the design of ballots and the tech-
16 nology used to process and count ballots, including
17 whether certain types of voting equipment and tech-
18 nology are more likely to result in undercounted or
19 uncounted votes, the advantages of uniform ballot
20 designs, the need for uniform standards for the de-
21 sign and maintenance of voting equipment and tech-
22 nology, and steps the Federal Government may take
23 to reduce counting errors, including providing need-
24 based grants to enable State and local governments
25 to replace outdated equipment and prohibiting the

1 use or sale of voting equipment which produces dis-
2 proportionately high error rates.

3 (4) POLLING PLACES.—Issues relating to the
4 timing of elections and the quality of services pro-
5 vided at polling places, including the feasibility and
6 effectiveness of establishing a uniform poll closing
7 time across the United States, establishing Election
8 Day as a Federal public holiday, holding elections
9 over a weekend or over other multiple days, ensuring
10 an appropriate number of accessible polling places,
11 ensuring that workers at polling places have suffi-
12 cient training, and providing education to voters in
13 the mechanics of voting.

14 (5) BALLOT ACCESS.—Issues relating to alter-
15 native methods of casting votes in elections, includ-
16 ing voting through the use of the mails or the Inter-
17 net, ensuring the absent military and overseas voters
18 are able to cast votes in an effective and timely man-
19 ner, and ensuring that election officials are able to
20 verify the legality of votes cast outside of polling
21 places.

22 (c) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after
23 the date of the initial meeting of the Commission, the
24 Commission shall submit to Congress and the President
25 a final report which includes an analysis of the matters

1 discussed under subsection (b) and recommendations for
2 addressing the problems identified as part of the Commis-
3 sion's analysis.

4 (d) SEPARATE VIEWS.—Any member of the Commis-
5 sion may submit additional findings and recommendations
6 as part of the final report.

7 **SEC. 5. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

8 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
9 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
10 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
11 may find advisable to fulfill the requirements of this Act.
12 The Commission may administer oaths and affirmations
13 to witnesses appearing before the Commission.

14 (b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
15 Commission may secure directly from any Federal depart-
16 ment or agency such information as the Commission con-
17 siders necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.
18 Upon request of the Chair of the Commission, the head
19 of such department or agency shall furnish such informa-
20 tion to the Commission.

21 (c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
22 the United States mails in the same manner and under
23 the same conditions as other departments and agencies of
24 the Federal Government.

1 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
2 the request of the Chair of the Commission, the Adminis-
3 trator of General Services shall provide to the Commis-
4 sion, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative support
5 services that are necessary to enable the Commission to
6 carry out its duties under this Act.

7 **SEC. 6. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

8 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of
9 the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the
10 Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal
11 to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay pre-
12 scribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under sec-
13 tion 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (in-
14 cluding travel time) during which such member is engaged
15 in the performance of the duties of the Commission. All
16 members of the Commission who are officers or employees
17 of the United States shall serve without compensation in
18 addition to that received for their services as officers or
19 employees of the United States.

20 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Com-
21 mission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
22 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employ-
23 ees of agencies under subchapter 1 of chapter 57 of title
24 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or

1 regular places of business in the performance of services
2 for the Commission.

3 (c) STAFF.—(1) The Chair of the Commission may
4 appoint and terminate staff of the Commission, request
5 the detail of Federal employees, and accept temporary and
6 intermittent services in accordance with section 3161 of
7 title 5, United States Code.

8 (2) The employment of an executive director of the
9 Commission shall be subject to the approval of the Com-
10 mission.

11 **SEC. 7. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.**

12 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the
13 date on which it submits its final report under section
14 4(c).

15 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
17 as may be necessary for the Commission to carry out this
18 Act.

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