

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7536

To require each eligible citizen to appear to vote in each regularly scheduled general election for Federal office, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 18, 2022

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To require each eligible citizen to appear to vote in each regularly scheduled general election for Federal office, 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 “Civic Duty to Vote
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO VOTING BY**
7 **CITIZENS.**

8 (a) REQUIREMENT TO APPEAR TO VOTE.—

9 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Each eligible citizen shall
10 appear to vote in each regularly scheduled general

1 election for Federal office as described in paragraph
2 (2).

3 (2) APPEARING TO VOTE DESCRIBED.—An eli-
4 gible citizen shall be deemed to appear to vote in a
5 regularly scheduled general election for Federal of-
6 fice if such citizen returns a ballot to vote in such
7 election to an appropriate State election official in
8 the State in which such citizen is eligible to vote by
9 any method authorized by the laws of the State in
10 which such election is held.

11 (3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this
12 subsection may be construed to require an eligible
13 citizen to cast a vote for any candidate in an election
14 for Federal office.

15 (b) CIVIL MONEY PENALTY FOR VIOLATION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
17 graph (4), a civil money penalty in the amount of
18 \$20 shall be assessed against any individual found
19 to be in violation of the requirements under sub-
20 section (a) unless the individual certifies to an ap-
21 propriate State election official that the individual
22 has a valid and sufficient reason for not appearing
23 to vote in any such election described in subsection
24 (a)(1).

1 (2) VALID AND SUFFICIENT REASON DE-
2 DESCRIBED.—The following shall be deemed to be a
3 valid and sufficient reason for not appearing to vote
4 in a regularly scheduled general election for Federal
5 office:

6 (A) An individual is unable to receive or
7 return a ballot in such an election because the
8 individual is not registered to vote in the elec-
9 tion in the State after a good faith attempt by
10 the individual to register to vote in such elec-
11 tion.

12 (B) An individual is unable to appear to
13 vote as a result of an emergency.

14 (C) An individual is unable to comply with
15 the requirements of subsection (a) due to sin-
16 cerely held religious or personal beliefs.

17 (D) An individual was unaware of the indi-
18 vidual's eligibility to vote in any such election.

19 (3) WAIVER.—The appropriate State election
20 official shall grant a waiver of the civil money pen-
21 alty under paragraph (1) with respect to any indi-
22 vidual found to be in violation of the requirement
23 under subsection (a)(1) who—

1 (A) certifies to the election official that the
2 individual cannot afford to pay such civil money
3 penalty; or

4 (B) attests that such individual will com-
5 plete one hour of community service.

6 (4) EXCEPTION.—In the case of an individual’s
7 first violation of the requirements under subsection
8 (a)—

9 (A) the civil money penalty under para-
10 graph (1) shall not apply; and

11 (B) the appropriate State election official
12 of the State in which such citizen is eligible to
13 vote shall send the individual a notice that in-
14 forms the individual of the violation and the
15 civil money penalty that will be assessed against
16 the individual with respect to any subsequent
17 violation.

18 (5) NO ADDITIONAL PENALTIES FOR FAILURE
19 TO PAY CIVIL MONEY PENALTY.—In the case of an
20 individual found to be in violation of the requirement
21 under subsection (a)(1) who fails to pay a civil
22 money penalty assessed under paragraph (1), such
23 individual shall not, as a result of such failure to
24 pay the civil money penalty, be subject to any addi-

1 tional civil or criminal penalties or any denial of gov-
2 ernment benefits.

3 (c) PROHIBITION AGAINST CERTAIN USES OF INFOR-
4 MATION.—

5 (1) PROHIBITION AGAINST INFORMATION SHAR-
6 ING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT.—A State election of-
7 ficial may not share any information provided by an
8 individual for the purposes of certifying a valid and
9 sufficient reason that the individual did not appear
10 to vote under subsection (b)(2) or receiving a waiver
11 of the civil money penalty under subsection (b)(3)
12 with any Federal, State, or local law enforcement
13 agency.

14 (2) PROHIBITION AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT
15 USE OF INFORMATION.—No Federal, State, or local
16 law enforcement agency may use any information
17 provided by an individual for the purposes of certi-
18 fying a valid and sufficient reason that the indi-
19 vidual did not appear to vote under subsection (b)(2)
20 to subject such individual to any additional penalties
21 or criminal investigation.

22 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply with
23 respect to the regularly scheduled general election for Fed-
24 eral office held in November 2024 and each succeeding
25 election for Federal office.

1 **SEC. 3. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION PUBLICATION**
2 **OF BEST PRACTICES.**

3 Not later than 60 days after the date of the enact-
4 ment of this Act, the Election Assistance Commission shall
5 develop and publish recommendations for best practices
6 for States to implement the requirements of this Act, in-
7 cluding practices for States to provide individuals with an
8 option on a ballot in an election for Federal office to af-
9 firmatively decline to vote for any candidate with respect
10 to each office in any such election.

11 **SEC. 4. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION GRANTS TO**
12 **STATES.**

13 (a) GRANTS TO STATES.—The Election Assistance
14 Commission shall make grants to each eligible State to
15 assist the State in implementing the requirements of this
16 Act.

17 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—A State is eligible to receive a
18 grant under this section if the State submits to the Com-
19 mission, at such time and in such form as the Commission
20 may require, an application containing such information
21 as the Commission determines appropriate.

22 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
23 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
24 necessary to carry out this section.

25 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

26 In this Act, the following definitions apply:

1 (1) ELIGIBLE CITIZEN.—The term “eligible cit-
2 izen” means a citizen who is eligible to vote in a reg-
3 ularly scheduled general election for Federal office in
4 a State pursuant to the laws of the State in which
5 the citizen resides.

6 (2) STATE.—The term “State” means each of
7 the several States and the District of Columbia.

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