

peace to South Asia. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add that this year marks the 50th anniversary of India's independence. Since her birth in 1947, India has hosted free and fair elections through a multiparty political system and has maintained an orderly transfer of power from government to its successor. In light of this achievement, I would urge President Clinton and more Members of this body to visit India this year and to support this momentous occasion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### INTRODUCING THE EXPANDED WAR CRIMES ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last week I introduced the Expanded War Crimes Act of 1997. It is a bill which expands the jurisdiction of my original bill, the War Crimes Act of 1996.

Last year I came before this House and told a story of a Navy pilot named Mike Cronin who had spent time as an uninvited guest of the Hanoi Hilton. I spoke of Mr. Cronin's time in Vietnam as an A-6 pilot and of his being shot down and taken prisoner of war and how he spent 6½ years living in a cage. Mike Cronin's story shocked many of you when I told you that upon his return to America he realized that while he and many others had witnessed horrible crimes of war being committed, no justice could be found within the U.S. court system because Congress had not yet enacted implementing legislation of the Geneva Convention. Well, a good number of you must have listened because I am pleased to say that last year Congress finally enacted implementing legislation of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Held by the strong support of the State Department, the Defense Department, the American Red Cross, and many others, the War Crimes Act of 1996 finally signed into law legislation originally proposed back in the 83d Congress. The War Crimes Act of 1996 gave the United States the legal authority to try and prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes against American citizens. Additionally those Americans prosecuted now have available all the procedural protections of the American justice systems, quite a victory for America.

The 105th Congress cannot and should not stop there. We must protect all the rights of our men and women defending the interests of our country abroad. It is for that reason that I introduced the Expanded War Crimes Act of 1997. I stand before this body today to encour-

age my colleagues to support this expanded bill. The War Crimes Act of 1997 expands the definition of my original bill to cover not only the grave breaches of the Geneva Convention but also a more general category of war crimes. The bill also includes important articles of the Hague Convention which has long been recognized as an important source of international humanitarian law with respects to means and method of warfare, and finally it includes the international protocol on land mines thereby insuring that the delivery and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines to harm civilians would constitute a criminal offense. While the bill is not retroactive, it can ensure that any future victims of war crimes will be given the full protection of the U.S. courts.

My colleagues, it is a bill which would rectify the existing discrepancies between our Nation's intolerance of war crimes and our inability to prosecute war criminals. Please join me as a cosponsor of this important and critical legislation.

#### NINTH ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DINNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a situation that is an ongoing problem in this country, and that is our ability to respond to disasters and life-threatening situations. At this very moment we are witnessing nationally the response to major flooding in the Dakotas. Over the past several years we have seen a number of incidents involving loss of life and property damage caused by hurricanes and tornadoes and earthquakes and fires of tremendous magnitudes. These incidents are becoming more complicated. Within the last several hours, there has been an incident uptown in Washington, DC, involving an unknown agent where first responders in this city had to respond in special suits because they were not sure whether or not it involved a chemical or biological incident.

Mr. Speaker, day in and day out, 1.2 million men and women in this country, our domestic defenders, respond to every disaster and emergency situation that this Congress or that this country and our communities face.

On Wednesday of next week, Mr. Speaker, we will in fact host the Ninth Annual Congressional Fire and Emergency Services dinner where 2,000 of the leaders of our domestic defenders across the country from every State will assemble in Washington to again celebrate the work that these brave individuals provide. They are involved in 32,000 organized departments, they are paid and they are volunteers, and they are out there day in and day out as the first responders to America's problems.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues to join with us in paying tribute to them. Speaker GINGRICH will be our keynote speaker this year. Last year we had AL GORE and we had Bob Dole. The previous 2 years we had President Clinton. Speaker GINGRICH will in fact address these individuals and reinforce the commitment of this Congress to work on their priorities.

During Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, starting at 12:45 the Marine Corps Chemical and Biological Incident Response Team, which was created by Congress over the past year, will respond to a simulated incident involving a chemical or biological agent in the Rayburn Park. Two hundred forty marines will arrive from Camp LeJeune, and they will demonstrate our country's ability to respond to a life-threatening situation involving an unknown agent.

But, Mr. Speaker, even though our marines are the finest in the world and this team is the finest in the world today, the first responders who have to go on these scenes in the first few minutes are those most at risk, and they are the ones that we have to make sure have the proper protection, the proper training, and the resources to meet these threats until reinforcements can in fact be provided by our military and by the marine response unit.

On Wednesday during the day and the evening, we will focus on this group of people and we will discuss the key priorities that we in this Congress can focus on to assist these 1.2 million men and women to better serve their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to join with us both during the day at the information sessions, meetings that will be held in Member offices, and finally on Wednesday evening to the Washington Hilton to attend the ninth annual dinner.

Mr. Speaker, there are no braver group of people in this country who respond to every type of disaster that we face as a nation, and many of them are not being paid to respond, and it is appropriate that we in the Congress provide the appropriate resources and support to allow them to continue to serve America.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE VOTER ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION ACT—H.R. 1428

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today I and 16 other colleagues are introducing the Voter Eligibility Verification Act, H.R. 1428. I think most American citizens would say that the very hallmark of citizenship is the right to cast one's vote and to have it counted. But in America we have increasingly situations where people who are not American citizens are voting, and local registrars and State chief election officers

are at their wit's end as to how we can find out who are American citizens and who are not.

The Voter Eligibility Verification Act of 1997 intends to solve that problem. I am very conscious of what one vote means. When I go to high school civic classes and talk to seniors, I stress my own primary back in 1992. I won by one-fifth of a vote per precinct.

So each vote is precious. One's individual vote does count, and in introducing this bill we are trying to ensure the integrity of national, State, and local elections. By preventing noncitizens from registering to vote, we are fulfilling the spirit of the Constitution. The 16 colleagues who join me have also had experience with close elections in Arizona, California, and Ohio among other States. In many jurisdictions, it is simply too easy to vote fraudulently.

Last October, California Secretary of State Bill Jones dropped 727 people from the voter rolls after they completed voter registration forms that simply indicated they were not citizens. Secretary Jones has endorsed the bill, and I would like to place his endorsement letter in the RECORD.

SECRETARY OF STATE,  
State of California, April 3, 1997.

Hon. STEVE HORN,  
Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HORN: I am writing to express my strong support of your proposed legislation to permit elections officials to have access to INS information.

As you know, I have set as my goal as Secretary of State 100% voter participation and zero tolerance for fraud. In the last two and a half years my office has moved aggressively towards both of these goals.

In regards to voter participation, I have established an aggressive and comprehensive outreach program via television, radio, signs on buses, printed messages on bank ATM receipts, grocery bags, La Opinion newspaper, and billboards, and a variety of other programs within the public and private sector.

My election reforms include a statewide voter file (CalVoter) to clean duplicate and deadwood voter records off our lists; a place on the voter registration form to provide a driver's license number as a unique identifier; the first ever cross-county check for double voters; a crackdown on bounty hunters, to name just a few. I am working hard to send a message of deterrence to any who would abuse our elections system in any way.

However, there are still some reforms uncompleted that are critical to the future integrity of California's election system. Number one is the issue of citizenship. The federal NVRA [National Voter Registration Act—"Motor Voter"] and California election law clearly state that only those persons who are United States citizens are eligible to register and vote in elections. Unfortunately, we have very limited tools to be able to verify or check if a voter is a citizen.

Your bill, which would provide for access to records residing with the Immigration and Naturalization Service would materially benefit election officials in our efforts to maintain the integrity of the voter file. Please feel free to contact my office for assistance in securing passage of this most important measure.

Sincerely,

BILL JONES,  
Secretary of State.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, in another startling case in 1994, it was discovered that Mexican presidential candidate Luis Donald Colosio was assassinated by one of his countrymen who had registered to vote in Los Angeles County twice despite the fact that he was not a citizen of the United States.

Elections are the very lifeblood of democracy. Fraud in elections poisons our electoral system and undermines the trust that is essential to democracy. Under the bill we are introducing today, State and local election officials would be able to make inquiries to the Social Security Administration which has a record of citizenship when they assign a Social Security number, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service which also can help verify people who have submitted to naturalization and citizenship.

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I want to emphasize that this legislation includes extensive restrictions on the use of the system to prevent discrimination and violations of privacy rights. This legislation strikes a vitally needed balance between protecting the sanctity of our elections and the rights of every individual.

Last year, we saw many elections where the possibility of noncitizens voting was before us. Last year in the 104th Congress, we passed a historic Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. It made it explicitly illegal for noncitizens to vote. But without having a way to verify registrants' ability to vote, State and local election officials simply could not enforce that law effectively.

Voting, as I suggested, is the most fundamental act of citizenship. The people who administer our elections ought to have access to the information they need to ensure the integrity of the ballot box. American citizens deserve no less.

Mr. Speaker, I attach for inclusion the following exhibits:

Exhibit I: A Summary of The Voter Eligibility Verification Act.

Exhibit II: The sponsors of H.R. 1428.

Exhibit III: The text of H.R. 1428.

#### EXHIBIT I

##### SUMMARY: THE VOTER ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION ACT

Under the bill, local election officials would be able to make inquiries with the Social Security Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to verify the citizenship of people who have submitted a voter registration application at the local level. Both agencies are involved because neither has a comprehensive record of all current citizens. The agencies only will respond if the inquiry is necessary for determining eligibility to vote.

The bill also makes it clear that state and local governments also may require the Social Security number as part of the voter registration process. According to the Congressional Research Service, 13 states require the Social Security number on their voter registration forms. It is optional on the forms of 14 states.

The bill requires the verification process to be designed to be as reliable and easy to

use as possible, so long as privacy and information security are protected. Election officials would be able to make inquiries through a toll-free telephone call or other toll-free electronic media.

The bill also requires Social Security and INS to update their information to make it as accurate possible, and to set up a process for prompt correction of erroneous information.

There is no mandate on state or local governments to use the proposed verification process. It is simply a tool available to them should they choose to use it.

The bill also includes extensive restrictions on the use of the verification process to prevent discrimination and violation of privacy. The verification process in the bill is to be designed and operated with administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to prevent unauthorized disclosure of personal information, and safeguards against discrimination, including the selective or unauthorized use of the verification process. The bill requires the verification process to be "uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965."

It explicitly does not authorize a "national ID card" or the creation of a new database.

Finally, people whose citizenship status cannot be confirmed by the process proposed in the bill would have the opportunity to provide proof of their citizenship to local registrars of voters. Under the bill, if an individual's citizenship cannot be confirmed, the election official has to notify the individual in writing and inform them of their right to establish their eligibility to vote (provide proof of citizenship). The individual's voter application can then be rejected, the individual's name can be removed from the voting rolls, or the individual can be given provisional voting status.

California Secretary of State Bill Jones has endorsed the bill. The bill's original co-sponsors are Representatives David Dreier (R-CA), Mark Foley (R-FL), Brian Bilbray (R-CA), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-CA), Phil English (R-PA), Elton Gallegly (R-CA), Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Jerry Lewis (R-CA), Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), Ron Packard (R-CA), Frank Riggs (R-CA), Ed Royce (R-CA), Cliff Stearns (R-FL), Bob Stump (R-AZ), and James Traficant (D-OH).

#### EXHIBIT II

##### THE SPONSORS OF H.R. 1428

- Mr. Horn and:
1. Mr. Dreier.
  2. Mr. Foley.
  3. Mr. Bilbray.
  4. Mr. Calvert.
  5. Mr. Cunningham.
  6. Mr. English (PA).
  7. Mr. Gallegly.
  8. Mr. Hunter.
  9. Mr. Lewis (CA).
  10. Mr. McKeon.
  11. Mr. Packard.
  12. Mr. Riggs.
  13. Mr. Royce.
  14. Mr. Stearns.
  15. Mr. Stump.
  16. Mr. Traficant.

#### EXHIBIT III

##### THE TEXT OF H.R. 1428

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Voter Eligibility Verification Act".

#### SEC. 2. VOTER ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMATION SYSTEM.

(2) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101, note)

is amended by inserting after the chapter heading for chapter 1 the following:

“VOTER ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMATION SYSTEM

“SEC. 401. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Security, shall establish a confirmation system through which they—

“(1) respond to inquiries made to verify the citizenship of an individual who has submitted a voter registration application, by Federal, State, and local officials (including voting registrars) with responsibility for determining an individual’s qualification to vote in a Federal, State, or local election; and

“(2) maintain a record of the inquiries that were made and of verifications provided (or not provided).

“(b) INITIAL RESPONSE.—The confirmation system shall provide for a confirmation or a tentative nonconfirmation of an individual’s citizenship by the Commissioner of Social Security as soon as practicable after an initial inquiry to the Commissioner.

“(c) SECONDARY VERIFICATION PROCESS IN CASE OF TENTATIVE NONCONFIRMATION.—In cases of tentative nonconfirmation, the Attorney General shall specify, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Security and the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, an available secondary verification process to confirm the validity of information provided and to provide a final confirmation or nonconfirmation as soon as practicable after the date of the tentative nonconfirmation.

“(d) DESIGN AND OPERATION OF SYSTEM.—The confirmation system shall be designed and operated—

“(1) to be used on a voluntary basis, as a supplementary information source, by Federal, State, and local election officials for the purpose of assessing the eligibility of voter registration applicants, and administering voter registration, through citizenship verification;

“(2) to respond to an inquiry concerning citizenship only in a case where determining whether an individual is a citizen is—

“(A) necessary for determining whether the individual is eligible to vote in an election for Federal, State, or local office; and

“(B) part of a program or activity to protect the integrity of the electoral process that is uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.);

“(3) to maximize its reliability and ease of use, consistent with insulating and protecting the privacy and security of the underlying information;

“(4) to permit inquiries to be made to the system through a toll-free telephone line or other toll-free electronic media;

“(5) to respond to all inquiries made by authorized persons and to register all times when they system is not responding to inquiries because of a malfunction;

“(6) with appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to prevent unauthorized disclosure of personal information; and

“(7) to have reasonable safeguards against the system’s resulting in unlawful discriminatory practices based on national origin or citizenship status, including the selective or unauthorized use of the system.

“(e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the confirmation system, the Commissioner of Social Security shall establish a reliable, secure method, which compares the name and social security account number provided in an inquiry against such information maintained by the Commissioner in order to confirm (or not confirm) the validity of the information provided regarding an individual whose iden-

tity and citizenship must be confirmed, the correspondence of the name and number, and whether the individual is a citizen of the United States. The Commissioner shall not disclose or release social security information (other than such confirmation or nonconfirmation).

“(2) PROVISION OF ALIEN IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.—In cases of tentative nonconfirmation of an individual’s citizenship by the Commissioner of Social Security after an initial inquiry to the Commissioner, the Commissioner, as part of the confirmation system, shall provide to the person making the inquiry any information the Commissioner maintains regarding an alien identification or authorization number for the individual established by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Attorney General, in consultation with the Commissioner, shall specify the information to be provided under this paragraph.

“(f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE.—As part of the confirmation system, the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service shall establish a reliable, secure method, which compares the name and alien identification or authorization number described in subsection (e)(2) which are provided in an inquiry against such information maintained by the Commissioner in order to confirm (or not confirm) the validity of the information provided, the correspondence of the name and number, and whether the individual is a citizen of the United States.

“(g) UPDATING INFORMATION.—The commissioners of Social Security and the Immigration and Naturalization Service shall update their information in a manner that promotes the maximum accuracy and shall provide a process for the prompt correction of erroneous information, including instances in which it is brought to their attention in the secondary verification process described in subsection (c).

“(h) LIMITATION ON USE OF THE CONFIRMATION SYSTEM AND ANY RELATED SYSTEMS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, nothing in this section shall be construed to permit or allow any department, bureau, or other agency of the United States Government to utilize any information, data base, or other records assembled under this section for any other purpose other than as provided for under this section.

“(2) NO NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize, directly or indirectly, the issuance or use of national identification cards or the establishment of a national identification card.

“(3) NO NEW DATA BASES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize, directly or indirectly, the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Social Security to create any joint computer data base that is not in existence on the date of the enactment of the Voter Eligibility Verification Act.

“(i) ACTIONS BY VOTING OFFICIALS UNABLE TO CONFIRM CITIZENSHIP.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In a case where an official who is authorized to receive information through use of the confirmation system is unable, after completion of the secondary verification process, to confirm the citizenship of an individual, the official—

“(A) shall so notify the individual in writing; and

“(B) shall inform the individual in writing of the individual’s right to use—

“(i) the process provided under subsection (g) for the prompt correction of erroneous information in the confirmation system; or

“(ii) any other process for establishing eligibility to vote provided under State or Federal law.

“(2) REGISTRATION APPLICANTS.—In the case of an individual who is an applicant for voter registration, and who receives a notice from an official under paragraph (1), the official may, subject to, and in a manner consistent with, State law, reject the application, or provisionally accept the application, pending the official’s receipt of adequate confirmation of the citizenship of the individual.

“(3) VOTER REMOVAL PROGRAMS.—In the case of an individual who is registered to vote, and who receives a notice from an official under paragraph (1) in connection with a program to remove the names of ineligible voters from an official list of eligible voters, the official may, subject to, and in a manner consistent with, State law, remove the name of the individual from the list, or grant the individual provisional voting status, pending the official’s receipt of adequate confirmation of the citizenship of the individual.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Immigration and Nationality Act is amended by inserting before the item relating to section 402 the following:

“Sec. 401. Voter eligibility confirmation system.”

**SEC. 3. PERMITTING STATES TO REQUIRE APPLICANTS REGISTERING TO VOTE TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.**

Clauses (i) and (vi) of section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)) are amended by inserting “voter registration,” after “driver’s license,”.

**KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENT**

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, today the trustees of Medicare issued their report and also the trustees of Social Security issued their report. I think this is another indication that this country, has got to do something, if we are going to keep Social Security solvent, if we are going to keep Social Security available to not only existing retirees, but future retirees.

In the report, the trustees estimated that the time that the Social Security Trust Fund was going to run out of money, the time that there was going to be less money coming in in taxes than was required for benefit payout would be 2012. And they also calculated a slight increase in their estimate of the tax increases necessary to keep Social Security solvent.

One year ago, they estimated that it would take a tax increase of 2.19 percent of payroll. This year they are estimating that it is going to take a tax increase of 2.23 percent of payroll, slightly a worse condition.

However, there is a couple of assumptions that the Social Security trustees used to come up with this estimate. One is they calculated that CPI would be one-half of 1 percent less than their estimates of a year ago.

The second assumption was that real interest rates would increase and therefore, the interest paid from the general fund to the Social Security Trust Fund on the Government securities in the fund would actually increase.