

According to that same report, these votes were lost due to a variety of reasons that have existed for a long time. They did not just happen in one place or in one election: Faulty equipment, confusing ballots, registration mixups, flawed polling place operations, absentee ballot problems, and the list goes on.

It was not about one State. We all focused on Florida, but the fact remains, in the other 49 States there were problems to varying degrees. Again, these problems were not limited to one State. In fact, the General Accounting Office found that 57 percent of voting jurisdictions nationwide experienced major problems conducting the November 7, 2000, elections.

These problems were not limited to one election. In fact, many of these are systemic problems with our election systems that have existed for years. For example, over 11 million Americans who are blind or have a hand mobility disability have never been able to cast a secret ballot. Not a single ballot in America is in braille.

In fact, according to the General Accounting Office, of the 120,000 polling places in America, 50,000 of them are physically inaccessible to the disabled. Despite the fact we passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, there still is a staggering number of our voting places that are not accessible.

We could spend a lot of time talking about what happened a year ago, but I want to take the few minutes available to me to strike a more positive note. Senator BOND of Missouri, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, myself, and Senator SCHUMER of New York are all working to put together a bill to bring to the Senate in the coming weeks. We are working on a compromise proposal that will allow us to try to fix the problems that existed in the year 2000 elections.

This is not about the past, but about the future of our democracy. As Thomas Paine once said, the right to vote is the right upon which all other rights depend. Certainly we ought to be able to get this right in the 21st century.

To reach that goal, those of us who are interested in the issue have been working together to come up with a bipartisan proposal that will meet the concerns and objectives of all of us in this Chamber and, hopefully, in the other body as well.

On August 2, the Rules Committee, which I chair, approved a bill which does three major things:

It creates a temporary commission to study election reform issues and issue "best practice" recommendations.

It creates a grant program to provide States and localities with Federal funds to acquire updated voting systems and technology, improve voter registration systems, and educate voters and poll workers.

It establishes three minimum Federal requirements for Federal elections and authorizes Federal funding for these requirements.

These three requirements provide for: Federal standards for voting machines and technology, provisional voting, and distribution of sample ballots and voting instructions.

There are a lot of ideas for improving our system that can be incorporated. It is not about ideology, it is about what reforms need to be made to enhance the voting systems of our country.

Our staffs are meeting. Senator BOND is deeply interested in the fraud issue. He has said what I think is the best line about the election process. Senator BOND says: Voting ought to be easy, and cheating ought to be hard. He is exactly right, and his efforts to try to deal with the fraud issues are ones I welcome.

I am hopeful we can weave reforms which address these issues into a bill to which we all will be willing to lend our names. I intend to continue to work with those Members who are interested in this subject.

We do not have the answer yet, but I did not want this day to pass when I know there will be a lot of discussion about what happened a year ago. Obviously, the events of September 11 threw the entire agenda of the Congress off its predictable path. We are scrambling to get back to some of these issues that need to be addressed. For Americans who wonder if anything has been done over the last year, the answer is yes. These are not simple matters. There are strongly held views. We have longstanding traditions about how voting is to be conducted in this country.

Americans, as they demonstrated yesterday in New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, and in places all over the country where elections were held, still believe very deeply in the right to vote and have their votes counted. I am hopeful that in the coming days we will be able to announce a compromise proposal.

Again, I thank my colleague from Missouri, Senator BOND, my colleague from Kentucky, Senator MCCONNELL, my colleague from New York, Senator SCHUMER, and many others interested in this subject matter. Our hope is we will soon be able to bring a compromise election reform bill before the Senate of the United States.

#### LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL

##### COMPASSION CAPITAL FUND

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise to inquire about the Compassion Capital Fund, which is funded in this bill at \$89 million. As my colleagues know, this fund was requested by the President as part of his Faith-Based Initiative. This is a significant amount of money and I want to note that the Senate has not yet considered legislation authorizing various aspects of the President's Faith-Based Initiative, including provisions which might alter longstanding rules on government funding of religious organizations.

Therefore, I would like to clarify several points with the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee about the uses of these funds. It is my understanding that this fund is supposed to provide grants to organizations for the purpose of advising charitable organizations on expanding their operations effectively and providing guidance on how to emulate model social service practices. Am I correct on that point?

Mr. HARKIN. The Senator is correct. The Compassion Capital Fund will provide grants to public/private partnerships to help charitable organizations develop "best practices" as a social service agency. The goal of grantees of the Compassion Capital Fund will be to improve the effectiveness of social programs and community initiatives around the Nation. The Senate has not yet debated the President's Faith Based Initiative, and the Senator is correct that this fund is only for the development of model best practices.

Mr. SPECTER. I appreciate the chairman and Senator from Rhode Island for clarifying these points. It is important to note that this appropriations bill is not changing any of the rules or standards for government funding of religious organizations and we have funded the two programs in the President's Faith-Based Initiative that we believe are authorized.

Mr. REED. I thank the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee for clarifying these points, and I look forward to working to further clarify this matter during the conference committee process.

#### CHANGES TO THE 2002 APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ALLOCATION AND BUDGETARY AGGREGATES

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, section 314 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended, requires the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to adjust the budgetary aggregates and the allocation for the Appropriations Committee by the amount of appropriations designated as emergency spending pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended. The conference report to H.R. 2620, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002, provides \$1.5 billion in designated emergency funding in 2002 for FEMA disaster relief. Because that budget authority is not estimated to result in any new outlays in 2002, the adjustment made herein is for budget authority only.

Pursuant to section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act, I hereby revise the 2002 allocation provided to the Senate Appropriations Committee in the concurrent budget resolution in the following amounts.

Pursuant to section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, I hereby revise the 2002 budget aggregates included in