GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1701, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 3295, HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2001

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct the conferees on the Help America Vote Act, H.R. 3295.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. WATERS moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendments to the bill H.R. 3295 be instructed to take such actions as may be appropriate to ensure that a conference report is filed on the bill prior to October 1, 2002.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) will be recognized for 30 minutes and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This motion instructs the conferees on H.R. 3295, the election reform legislation, to complete their work and file a conference report prior to October 31, 2002. Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 2 years since the 2000 Presidential election, an election that created a crisis of confidence in our Nation's election system. It has been more than 9 months since the House of Representatives passed the Help America Vote Act, H.R. 3295. It has been more than 5 months since the Senate passed its version of election reform legislation, S. 565, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Equal Protection of Voting Rights Act of 2002 by a vote of 99 to 1. Yet the conferees still have not completed their work.

The 2000 Presidential election lost between 500,000 and 1.2 million votes because of faulty machines, confusing ballot designations and designs, reported voter intimidation, and other human and mechanical impediments to the voting process. According to the United States census population survey, 2.8 percent of the 40 million voters who did not vote in 2000 stated they did not vote because of problems with polling place operations such as long lines and inconvenient hours or locations. Many of those who did vote in 2000 found themselves wondering whether their vote was counted and whether they actually voted for the candidate of their choice. We have already begun to observe similar problems in the 2002 primary election in several States, not to mention Florida one more time.

Mr. Speaker, in February of 2001, because of all of this, House Democratic leader Richard Gephardt asked me to lead the Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Election Reform. The committee was given the responsibility to travel throughout America and examine our Nation's voting practices and equipment. Over a 6-month period of time, this committee held six public-filled hearings in Philadelphia, San Antonio, Chicago, Jacksonville, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. We heard from election experts and hundreds of voters about what is wrong with our election system. I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of interest and support we received from our Nation's voters.

Our committee released a comprehensive report on November 7, 2001, the anniversary of the 2000 election debacle. The committee's report, entitled Revitalizing our Nation's Election System, set forth targeted minimal standards for Federal elections in order to guarantee that every vote will count. This report became part of the foundation for H.R. 3295, the Help America Vote Act of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, not only did Leader GEPHARDT appoint me to lead the Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Election Reform, many other committees around this country were working to try to find out what went wrong, what is wrong with our election system, what is it we have not paid attention to, what caused us to get to the point of such dysfunction in that election. The NAACP held hearings. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held hearings. There was a Carter-Ford Commission, and then, of course, this legislation was taken up that I am referring to by the Committee on House Administration led by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY). And, of course, even though the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is not here today, our ranking member on the Committee of the Judiciary has spent countless hours meeting with human rights groups and civil rights groups not only here in the Capitol but across the country, and I am told by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that wherever he travels, he is asked what is going to be done about election reform? What are you going to do to correct the problems in the election system?

In addition to that, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and many others that I am unable to notice today have already been holding hearings, gathering information and trying to bring us to a point of reform.

With that, let me just say that the Help America Vote Act would establish the election assistance commission, set up a program to buy out or improve antiquated punch card voting systems, authorize funds to improve the administration of elections, improve procedures for uniform and overseas voters, and set certain minimal standards for State and local election systems.

The Help America Vote Act was passed again by the House of Representatives on December 12, 2001, by an overwhelming vote of 362 to 63. You can see, Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to do something. It is time for the conferees to act. We need to get this conference report done and reported out.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the gentlewoman from California's (Ms. WATERS) motion to instruct, the one offered by the distinguished Member. I want to thank her for offering the motion.

I believe that the conferees, Mr. Speaker, on the election reform bill are within sight of an agreement that will bring critically needed aid and assistance to improve elections in the United States, and I believe this motion to instruct will have a positive effect of reminding the conferees on both sides of the aisle that reasonable negotiations are critical to getting this conference report done in the very near future. It is not that we need reminding, but I think this helps. We simply cannot afford to deadlock this conference because either side makes unrealistic demands at the last minute.

Let us talk for a minute about what both sides agree on, and I think it is important to note. We agree that we should authorize substantial sums of Federal dollars to modernize election systems in the next few years. We agree that obsolete voting systems like punch cards and lever machines should be replaced as rapidly as possible. We agree that voters in all States should have their rights protected by imposing basic requirements. We agree that those requirements should include guaranteed access to voting machines and ensure ballot access and secrecy for those who have a form of a disability. We agree that they should guarantee a voter's right to review his or her ballot to correct errors before that ballot is cast. We agree that they should guarantee a voter's right to provisional ballots so no voter is turned away from the polls in the United States. We agree that there should be an election assistance commission to help States comply with these requirements. We agree that there should be strong enforcement by the Department of Justice to ensure that these provisions are fully complied with as the law of the land. We agree there should be research and pilot programs to develop and to test new technologies to improve our voting systems.

We also agree, Mr. Speaker, there should be programs to encourage both