

voting for failing to provide photographic identification upon request, despite the lack of such requirements under state or federal law.

Arizona—Latino voters in Pima County, Arizona were reportedly met at multiple polling places with a man who claimed he was “bent on discovering” how many illegal immigrants were voting in the 2004 primary election. Dressed in a black shirt with the image of a badge and the words “U.S. Constitution Enforcement” on his back, the man carried a camera and video recorder holstered in a tool belt as he entered polling places, looking for “anomalies.”

Wisconsin—In the days leading up to the 2004 presidential election, voters in Milwaukee’s African American neighborhoods received flyers from the fictional “Milwaukee Black Voters League.” The flier falsely claimed that individuals could be found ineligible to vote due to traffic violations, the criminal records of family members and voting in a previous election during the year.” Voters were also warned that violations of such “laws” could result in a ten-year prison sentence or forced separation from one’s children.

Virginia—Voters in eight Virginia counties were apparent victims of attempts at intimidation just before the 2006 election. Some received messages from callers claiming to be from the non-existent “Virginia Elections Commission,” telling them of incorrect voter registration information and possible criminal charges for voting. Other callers falsely claimed to represent a federal campaign and told voters that their polling places had changed, sometimes to addresses that did not exist.

California—In 2006, Latino voters in Orange County, California, received mailings from the “California Coalition for Immigration Reform,” falsely warning them in Spanish that “if you are an immigrant, voting in a federal election is a crime that can result in incarceration.”

Maryland—In 2006 certain candidates distributed fliers in predominantly African-American neighborhoods falsely claiming that the candidates had been endorsed by their opponents’ party and by prominent African American figures.

Florida—In 2004, over 4,000 potential voters, including students at the University of Florida and Florida A&M University, discovered their party registrations had been switched and their addresses changed. Changed addresses could have barred them from voting because they would have shown up at the wrong polling place.

Pennsylvania—In Pittsburgh, fliers printed on county letterhead stated that “due to immense voter turnout expected on Tuesday,” the election had been extended: Republicans vote on November 2, and Democrats vote on November 3. Across the country, voters received similar fliers in the 2004 presidential election.

1. Pennsylvania and Illinois/Abusive Robo-Calls—The media also detailed numerous instances of prerecorded phone calls designed to confuse voters. These misleading calls were made late in the evening, or during the night, in an apparent effort to generate anger at particular candidates. According to the Associated Press, one individual “received three prerecorded messages in four hours. Each began, ‘Hello, I’m calling with information about [candidate] Lois Murphy [in the Philadelphia area].’” The Philadelphia Daily News re-

ported that “[t]he calls, which begin by offering ‘important information about Lois Murphy,’ are designed to mislead voters into thinking the message is from her.” In Illinois, The Barrington Courier-Review reported that a resident received the following phone call—“Hi, I’m calling with information about [Candidate] Melissa Bean.” She received the same call a total of 21 times since October 24. Others reported receiving the same calls, none of which were paid for by Ms. BEAN’s campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 1281 to make the necessary changes that will ensure the highest level of voter integrity.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1281 to make it unlawful for anyone to disseminate false election-related information about an election in order to prevent another person from exercising the right to vote. I commend Chairman CONYERS and Representative EMANUEL for their leadership in bringing this critical bill to the floor.

The pernicious practices that H.R. 1281 would combat are not just academic to me. During the Maryland governor’s race last year, there were numerous and substantiated reports of political operatives distributing false campaign materials on Election Day to confuse voters about the candidates, including endorsements they had allegedly received.

In recent elections in Maryland, including the 2006 elections, operatives have also spread false information about the time, place or manner of voting or qualifications for, or restrictions on, voting, or the political affiliations of candidates.

These grotesque practices are a direct assault on the most fundamental right of Americans: the right to vote and have that vote counted.

Over the past 40 years, tremendous progress has been made removing the most conspicuous obstacles and impediments to voting in order to guarantee that all Americans, regardless of their race or color, can vote. Unfortunately, there exists in our Nation a small but committed group of individuals who will sink to any low if they believe it will produce a victory. H.R. 1281 goes after these people, who are a disease on our democratic system.

I am hopeful that the House will overwhelming pass H.R. 1281 and send the message that deceptive campaign practices are un-American and anti-democratic.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as an original cosponsor and strong supporter of H.R. 1281, the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Act of 2007.

This is an issue that is close to my heart. I am grateful to my colleagues Mr. EMANUEL, for introducing this legislation, and Chairman CONYERS, for his consideration or H.R. 1281 in the Judiciary Committee.

The great promise of America is that every citizen has a vote, a voice in how our government is run. And we’ve seen in recent years where 100 or 50 or 5 or even 1 vote has changed the outcome of an election. So making sure that every U.S. citizen is able to vote is one of our most fundamental responsibilities.

When most people think of Voting Rights Act violations they think of the 1960s, when African Americans were prevented from voting because of the color of their skin. Many do not

realize that voter suppression still occurs today.

The targets of intimidation remain the same. This last election, minority and naturalized immigrant communities were the targets of deception, misinformation and voter intimidation designed to abridge their right to vote.

In the district I represent, California’s 47th, concerns were raised when about 14,000 registered Hispanic voters received a written letter, in Spanish, from the “California Coalition for Immigration Reform” informing voters that immigrants voting in a federal election were committing a crime “that could result in incarceration and possible deportation. . . .”

It also went on to advise voters that “the U.S. government is installing a new computerized system to verify names of all the newly registered voters who participate in the elections in October and November. Organizations against immigration will be able to request information from this new computerized system.”

The intent of the letter was to intimidate. Families were afraid that their personal information would be shared with anti-immigration groups if they voted. They were afraid of retaliation for exercising their right to vote.

Revisiting and reforming the voting rights laws will send a clear message to potential violators that deceptive practices are unacceptable and will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

H.R. 1281 will strengthen the prohibition and punishment of deceptive practices that aim to keep voters away from the polls on Election Day.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which will go a long way in preventing future acts of voter intimidation.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1281, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2643, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-211) on the resolution (H. Res. 514) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.