

*Bob Dole*



**NEWS**

**U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
APRIL 24, 1991

CONTACT: WALT RIKER  
(202) 224-5358

**MOTOR VOTER**

**"MOTOR VOTER" LEGISLATION**

I JOIN TODAY WITH MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE, SENATOR STEVENS, IN INTRODUCING THE "NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1991." THIS LEGISLATION IS INTENDED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO S. 250, THE SO-CALLED "MOTOR VOTER" BILL REPORTED BY THE RULES COMMITTEE TODAY. THE ALTERNATIVE WAS ENDORSED LAST YEAR BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AND THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES AND HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

**LOW VOTER TURNOUT**

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN ELECTION EXPERT TO REALIZE THAT VOTER TURNOUT IS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW. IN 1988, FOR EXAMPLE, BARELY 50% OF ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS WENT TO THE POLLS -- THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE IN MORE THAN 40 YEARS. PARTICIPATION IN MID-TERM ELECTIONS IS EVEN LOWER, DOWN TO ABOUT 34.4% IN 1990 ACCORDING TO THE COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THESE ARE DISTURBING TRENDS. BUT THEY ARE TRENDS THAT S. 250 -- DESPITE ALL THE HYPE AND ITS FANCY NAME -- WILL DO ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO REVERSE.

UNFORTUNATELY, LOW VOTER TURNOUT HAS LESS TO DO WITH OBSTACLES TO VOTER REGISTRATION AND MORE TO DO WITH OTHER FACTORS -- FACTORS LIKE THE LACK OF COMPETITIVE CONGRESSIONAL RACES, THE LACKLUSTER MESSAGES OF OUR NATION'S POLITICIANS, AND THE FRUSTRATION OF MANY CITIZENS WHO FEEL THAT THEIR VOTES SIMPLY DON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON ELECTION DAY.

S. 250 -- THE "MOTOR VOTER" BILL -- WILL CORRECT NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS. IT WON'T MAKE CONGRESSIONAL RACES MORE COMPETITIVE. IT WON'T RESTORE VOTER CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM. IT WON'T GUARANTEE HIGH TURN-OUTS ON ELECTION DAY.

BUT IT WILL OPEN THE DOOR FOR RAMPANT FRAUD. AND IT WILL FEDERALIZE AN ACTIVITY -- VOTER REGISTRATION -- THAT THE INDIVIDUAL STATES HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMED FOR DECADES.

**THE ALTERNATIVE: PROMOTES REGISTRATION, NOT FEDERAL INTERVENTION**

THE ALTERNATIVE ALSO AVOIDS ONE OF THE GREATEST WEAKNESSES OF S. 250 -- THE IMPOSITION OF UNFUNDED COSTS ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THESE COSTS CAN BE VERY SUBSTANTIAL. ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES PREPARED BY EIGHT STATES -- ALASKA, CALIFORNIA, FLORIDA, ILLINOIS, KANSAS, NEW JERSEY, OKLAHOMA, AND VIRGINIA -- THE TOTAL COST OF COMPLYING WITH S. 250'S REQUIREMENTS WOULD EXCEED \$80 MILLION. THE TOTAL COST FOR ALL 50 STATES WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE MUCH HIGHER.

UNFORTUNATELY, S. 250 SAYS NOTHING ABOUT HOW THE STATES SHOULD FINANCE THESE NEW, BURDENSOME REQUIREMENTS.

IT'S VOTER REGISTRATION STICKER-SHOCK: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MANDATES. AND THE STATES PICK UP THE TAB.

THE ALTERNATIVE, ON THE OTHER HAND, ATTEMPTS TO LEND A HELPING-HAND TO THE STATES BY AUTHORIZING A TOTAL OF \$25 MILLION OVER 3 YEARS IN BLOCK GRANTS AS AN INCENTIVE FOR STATES TO IMPLEMENT IMPROVED VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES. THESE NEW PROCEDURES INCLUDE: 1) REGISTRATION AT STATE DEPARTMENTS OF MOTOR VEHICLES, 2) REGISTRATION BY MAIL, AND 3) REGISTRATION AT STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. UNLIKE S. 250, IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PROCEDURES WOULD BE COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE BLOCK GRANTS, STATES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MATCH ANY AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUNDS DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR WITH STATE FUNDS.

THE ALTERNATIVE: COMBATS ELECTION FRAUD

THE ALTERNATIVE ALSO BEEFS UP FEDERAL AND STATE EFFORTS TO COMBAT ELECTION FRAUD AND PUBLIC CORRUPTION.

**PUBLIC CORRUPTION.** FEDERAL LAW CURRENTLY REQUIRES THE USE OF THE MAILS IN A CORRUPTION SCHEME BY LOCAL OR STATE OFFICIALS IN ORDER FOR MOST FEDERAL PROSECUTIONS TO SUCCEED. AS A RESULT, IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR FEDERAL PROSECUTORS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST A STATE JUDGE WHO "SHAKES DOWN" DEFENDANTS APPEARING IN HIS COURT, BECAUSE HIS ACTS DO NOT INVOLVE THE USE OF THE MAILS OR AN EFFECT ON COMMERCE. IT'S ALSO COMMON FOR OTHER CORRUPTION SCHEMES TO BE PERPETRATED WITHOUT THE USE OF THE MAILS.

THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD REMEDY THIS PROBLEM BY ENLARGING THE LIST OF ACTIVITIES THAT COULD TRIGGER FEDERAL JURISDICTION. THIS NEW LIST OF JURISDICTIONAL ACTS INCLUDES TRANSMITTING MESSAGES OVER INTERSTATE WIRES; TRANSPORTING PERSONS ACROSS STATE LINES; AND USING ANY FACILITY OF INTERSTATE COMMERCE SUCH AS A CROSS-TOWN DELIVERY SERVICE OR A "FAX" MACHINE.

**ELECTION FRAUD.** CURRENT LAW REQUIRES THAT A FEDERAL CANDIDATE BE NAMED ON THE BALLOT IN ORDER FOR A FEDERAL PROSECUTION OF ELECTION FRAUD TO SUCCEED. VIRTUALLY ALL ELECTION FRAUD, HOWEVER, IS UNDERTAKEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING THE OUTCOME OF LOCAL ELECTIONS, WHERE FEDERAL CANDIDATES ARE LISTED ONLY INFREQUENTLY. IN SOME STATES, ELECTIONS ARE HELD SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR WITHOUT FEDERAL CANDIDATES, WHICH RENDERS THEM IMMUNE FROM FEDERAL PROSECUTION FOR VOTE-BUYING, BALLOT-BOX STUFFING, TAMPERING WITH VOTING EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTION FRAUD.

THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD CLOSE THIS LOOPHOLE BY PERMITTING PROSECUTION IN FEDERAL COURT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER FEDERAL CANDIDATES ARE INVOLVED IN THE FRAUD OR NAMED ON THE BALLOT WHEN THE ACT OF FRAUD OCCURS. IT WOULD SPECIFICALLY PERMIT PROSECUTION FOR FRAUD IN A LOCAL ELECTION IF THE LOCAL OFFICE, FOR WHICH THE ELECTION IS BEING HELD, HAS CONTROL OVER FEDERAL FUNDS TOTTALLING \$10,000 OR MORE IN A YEAR.

I URGE ALL OF MY COLLEAGUES TO GIVE THE ALTERNATIVE THEIR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. I ALSO ENCOURAGE MY COLLEAGUES TO CONTACT THE ELECTION OFFICIALS OF THEIR HOME STATES AND ASK THESE OFFICIALS ONE SIMPLE QUESTION: WHICH PIECE OF LEGISLATION WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL IN YOUR EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE RATE OF VOTER REGISTRATION -- S. 250 OR THE ALTERNATIVE? THE ANSWERS COULD BE SURPRISING.

I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT THE FULL TEXT OF THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1991 AND A SUMMARY OF THE BILL BE PRINTED IN THE RECORD IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY REMARKS. I ALSO ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT A LETTER FROM W. LEE RAWLS, ASSISTANT ATTOTNEY GENERAL FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, BE PRINTED IN THE RECORD AS WELL.

###