



August 2, 2007

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Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I write to express our continuing concerns with H.R. 811, and the proposed "compromise" amendments. The proposed amendments for H.R. 811 would require the entire nation to switch to next-generation voting equipment before the presidential election in 2012, which would effectively derail California's already-rigorous and successful election laws, systems testing, and voter accessibility practices. In fact, the proposed amendments to H.R. 811 have the potential to eliminate several methods of voting that in California's November 2006 statewide election performed with 100 percent accuracy.

California's 58 counties have fully complied with the 2002 Help America Vote Act, and have also complied with more rigorous state standards, including the creation of voter verified paper audit trails for each vote cast within the state. Recently, the California Legislature passed, and Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation to move California's Presidential Primary election to February 5, 2008, the earliest such primary ever held in the state. The proposed amendments to H.R. 811 would create a tremendous fiscal and logistical burden to California's already proven successful election practices.

Additionally, proposed amendments include language that would expand the requirement for the audio format option of paper ballots to make this process "hands-free" – which would render obsolete all of the electronic voting equipment, including both direct recording electronic voting devices and ballot marking devices, such as the AutoMARK, that California counties recently purchased to comply with the accessibility requirements of the Help America Vote Act. Furthermore, this bill would require the use of pre-printed paper ballots at every polling site, even at early voting and vote center locations. These ballots would have to be available in case of voting system failure in 2008, and be offered to every voter beginning in 2010.

It is for these reasons that CSAC opposes the proposed amendments and respectfully requests that H.R. 811 not be moved until adequate timeframes and funding are incorporated into the bill. Our counties stand ready to assist Congress in determining the consequences and costs associated with this legislation, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss our position further at your convenience. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 916/327-7500 ext. 511.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Keene'.

Karen Keene
Legislative Representative