



Save

## **Student Association for Voter Empowerment**

### **Initiative:**

- Utilizing a *National Voter Awareness Week* platform to create civic engagement and voter registration opportunities for all 18 year old American citizens. This platform was conceived of by SAVE members and introduced as a bipartisan congressional resolution on October 1, 2008 by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Congressman Zack Space (D-OH) and Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC).

### **Background:**

- In a list of countries tabulated by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in 2005, the United States ranks 139th in voter turnout percentage, far behind nations that lack our industry.
- Because many states have 30-day voter registration deadlines, the public must be informed of their local and state election laws in September in order to participate fully in the federal elections in November.
- S. 1901, introduced in the 102nd Congress, would have amended section 6103 of title 5, United States Code, to establish Democracy Day as a legal public holiday on Election Day, in recognition of the need for increased participation of an educated electorate to preserve the legitimacy of democracy.
- Americans already celebrate *National Constitution Day* every year on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Summary:**

- Senate Resolution 685 designates the last week of September 2008 as 'National Voter Awareness Week'
- It calls upon the people of the United States to observe such a week with appropriate programs and activities, including helping state and local institutions deliver sample ballots, voter registration forms, absentee ballots, and other educational materials to all eligible voters.
- It encourages all grassroots organizations and educational, cultural, and community institutions to promote voter awareness and registration programs that benefit local election procedure.
- Specific programming to involve high school students in local government, legislation or mocks elections can also be pursued during this week.



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.....  
(Original Signature of Member)

110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. \_\_\_\_\_

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Voter Awareness Week.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SPACE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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# RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Voter Awareness Week.

Whereas the Framers established the United States as a representative democracy with the fundamental principle of civic engagement on the part of all eligible citizens;

Whereas an essential element of an effective democracy is the ability of each eligible and qualified citizen to be able to vote in fair and open elections;

Whereas Congress has passed important election laws dedicated to increasing the transparency of the election process, strengthening our voting systems, and protecting the right of all citizens to vote, such as the Help America



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Vote Act of 2002, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas the 26th amendment to the United States Constitution states that the “right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on the account of age”;

Whereas Minnesota, Maine, New Hampshire, Idaho, Wisconsin, and Wyoming allow same-day registration of voters at the polls, and also experience the highest voter turnout rates in the country;

Whereas most States have 30-day voter registration deadlines, therefore the public must be informed of their local and State election laws in September to participate fully in the Federal elections in November;

Whereas experts estimate that more than 20 percent of voters nationwide will cast their ballots before election day in November 2008 by mail or at early-voting locations, a proportion of the electorate that is rising with each election;

Whereas many election officials note that early voting is convenient for voters, increases turnout, and reduces the strain on polling places and poll workers on election day;

Whereas, according to FairVote, a nonpartisan voting and democracy resource center, voter turnout in the United States is lower than in other developed nations, ranking 20th out of 21 in voter turnout among such nations; and

Whereas Senate bill 1901 in the 102d Congress proposed to amend section 6103 of title 5, United States Code, to establish Democracy Day as a legal public holiday on election day, in recognition of the need for increased partici-



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pation of an educated electorate to preserve the legitimacy of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved, That—*

2               (1) it is the sense of the House of Representa-  
3       tives that—

4               (A) there should be established a National  
5       Voter Awareness Week; and

6               (B) the President should issue a proclama-  
7       tion calling on the people of the United States  
8       to observe National Voter Awareness Week with  
9       appropriate programs and activities including  
10      helping State and local institutions deliver sam-  
11      ple ballots, voter registration forms, absentee  
12      ballots, and other education materials to all eli-  
13      gible voters; and

14              (2) the House of Representatives encourages all  
15      grassroots organizations and educational, cultural,  
16      and community institutions to promote voter aware-  
17      ness and registration programs that befit local elec-  
18      tion procedure.