

May 9, 2007

E-Voting Reform Clears House Committee; ACM Applauds Congressional Attention

I apologize for overloading the blog today, but this has been a busy week so far.

Late yesterday afternoon the Committee on House Administration passed, on a partyline vote, Representative Rush Holt's legislation – The Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007. ([Here](#) is the amended version that passed out of committee. For background on the legislation see our posts (1,2.) This legislation may be referred to other House Committee for consideration, or may go straight to the full House for action. We should know more about this in a few days.

Below is our release on the Committee's action:

ACM APPLAUDS COMMITTEE VOTE ON E-VOTING REFORM LEGISLATION Cites Passage of Provisions to Assure Security, Reliability of Election Process

Washington, DC, May 9, 2007 – Barbara Simons, a member of ACM's U.S. Public Policy Committee (USACM), sees today's passage of legislation by a U.S. House of Representatives Committee as a critical and much needed step forward toward reforming the e-voting system. Simons, who chairs USACM's voting subcommittee, said the bill, H.R. 811– the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007 – reflects much of what the computing community has sought as a means of protecting the voting process against security risks, potential software bugs, or voting machine failure during an election. This act would require voting jurisdictions to use properly designed paper records and random manual audits to clearly convey voter intent and dramatically increase the transparency of America's voting system. The legislation also makes several important reforms to improve the testing and certification process for e-voting systems.

The bill, introduced by Representative Rush Holt (D. NJ) to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002, passed the Committee on House Administration following a series of hearings on e-voting issues. The legislation now moves on to the full House of Representatives for consideration.

“This is the beginning of a much-needed legislative process to address the many security, reliability, accessibility, and usability issues facing the electorate from e-voting systems,” said Simons. “The approved legislation acknowledges the standards set by USACM to protect the accuracy and impartiality of the electoral process. We have emphasized the need for all voting systems – particularly computer-based electronic voting systems – to embody careful engineering, strong safeguards, and rigorous testing in both their design and operation. We have also urged that voting systems enable each voter to inspect a physical (e.g., paper) record to verify that his or her vote has been accurately cast and to serve as an independent check on the result produced and stored by the system.”

Simons cited testimony before the House committee by USACM members David Wagner and Edward Felten that offered ways to ensure that our voting systems accurately collect and count votes. “We are pleased that the Congress has provided an opportunity for open debate and consideration of an issue we view as critical to the integrity of the election process,” she said.

For more information on USACM's e-voting policy statement, see <http://www.acm.org/usacm/Issues/EVoting.htm>