

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ETHICS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Representative Tony Powell at 3:30 p.m. on January 28, 2002 in Room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Cindy Hermes, Excused
Representative Troy Findley, Excused
Representative R.J. Wilson, Excused

Committee staff present: Kenneth Wilke, Revisor
Shirley Weideman, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Powell received a request from the American Government students at Hiawatha High School to amend the constitution to allow 17 year olds who will turn 18 before the general election to vote in the primary election even if they are 17 years old.

Without objection, it will be introduced by the committee as a House Concurrent Resolution.

Chair Powell introduced Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh. Secretary Thornburgh gave an overview of federal election reform legislation. He stated that the most important elements of election reform are to educate people, reform the process and reform the technology (least important), however, most of the election reform concerns technology. Secretary Thornburgh gave a side-by-side comparison of H.R. 3295, the Ney/Hoyer "Help America Vote Act" and S. 565, the Dodd/McConnell "Equal Protection of Voting Rights Act". The House version (H.R. 3295), which passed the House of Representatives on Dec. 12, 2001, contains provisions for 1) effective date for mandates/minimum standards, 2) penalties for noncompliance with mandates/minimum standards, 3) agency responsible for oversight, 4) grant programs, 5) access for disabled, 6) provisional voting, 7) statewide voter registration system, 8) file maintenance, 9) overvote correction, 10) federal voluntary voting system standards, 11) audit capacity, 12) error rates, 13) overseas voters, 14) voter education, poll worker training, 15) Help America Vote College Program and Help America Vote Foundation, 16) compliance with existing federal laws, 17) supplantation/retroactive payments and 18) audit/report requirements. The Senate bill (S. 565), which should come up for a vote in February, has no provision for overseas voters, voter education, poll workers training and no "Help America Vote" program or foundation. It does add provisions for 1) alternative language accessibility, 2) voter fraud, 3) requiring voter identification, 4) overvote notification, 5) posting information at the polls and 6) criminal penalties. (Attachment #1) He discussed the possible costs to the state for election reform and possible sources of funding.

Secretary Thornburgh responded to committee members' questions.

Chairman Powell adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is January 30 at 3:30 p.m.

CONTINUATION SHEET