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The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN)

June 21, 1997, SATURDAY, FINAL EDITION

*Motor
Voters*

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A7

LENGTH: 415 words

HEADLINE: MANY FELT CALLED TO REGISTER; FAR FEWER HAVE CHOSEN TO VOTE

BYLINE: Connie Cass The Associated Press

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Some 3.4 million Americans signed up to vote thanks to a law letting them register by mail or while renewing a driver's license. But the ''motor voters'' didn't motor to the polls.

Turnout for last year's presidential election dropped even as registration hit a record high, a Federal Election Commission study found.

Nearly three-fourths of people old enough to vote were registered, while just under half cast a ballot, the FEC said.

Nationally, 136.8 million people were registered, excluding those believed to have moved to a different district, the FEC said.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia are covered by the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, known as the motor voter law. Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, New Hampshire and Wyoming were exempted because they already had similar systems or provided easy access to would-be voters.

Despite the low turnout, supporters said, the national motor voter law was effective.

''The law is about providing the opportunity,'' said Curtis Gans, director of the nonpartisan Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. ''It's up to our political system to provide the motivation to vote.''

The law requires most states to let people register at the local driver's license bureau, when applying for welfare or disability benefits and by mail.

Gans said there was no evidence it gave either Democratic or Republican candidates an edge, although the number of people registered as independents or third-party voters has risen.

The FEC said voter registration increased from about 71 percent in 1992, the last presidential election year, to 73 percent in 1996. That was the highest registration level since reliable recordkeeping began in 1960.

The biggest increase was in the South, where states were less likely to already have either motor voter or mail-in registration.

The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN), June 21, 1997

The report also said:

-- Driver's-license offices were the most popular place to file a voter registration card, the choice of one-third of applicants. That's partly because 26 states had some form of motor voter program set up before the new law.

-- Postcards sent through the mail were almost as popular, making up 30 percent of applications.

-- More traditional methods, including voter registration drives and signing up in person with registrars, accounted for just over one-quarter.

-- Other government agencies, including public assistance offices, received 11 percent of applications.

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Chattanooga Free Press

July 6, 1997, Sunday

SECTION: WEEKEND; Pg. M2

LENGTH: 972 words

HEADLINE: Coverdell Says Taxes Erode American Freedom

BYLINE: Victor Miller, Free Press Staff Writer

BODY:

U.S. Sen. Paul Coverdell, R-Ga., has raised more than \$3 million for his 1998 re-election campaign, according to the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

The committee, hoping to scare off potential challengers, noted that Sen. Coverdell's campaign has \$1.75 million in cash-on-hand, \$154,000 in uncollected campaign account interest, \$285,000 in outstanding pledges and potential funding from the committee of \$600,000.

* In a "Capitol Comment" for the July 4th holiday, Sen. Coverdell said evaluating the state of the nation's financial independence leads to two conclusions, "excessive and pervasive government taxation threatens the very foundation of American freedom," and "reducing this crushing tax burden will reverse a disturbing trend that contradicts the core values" of the nation's founding fathers.

Sen. Coverdell said taxes have led to an "erosion" of American freedom: "Those individuals who won our independence -- Washington, Jefferson, Madison -- never could have imagined such an erosion ... I believe the time has come to change course and inaugurate a new era governed by a simple goal: Less government, more freedom."

He said the bipartisan plan Congress has been seeking "pursues these very objectives. The proposal would, among a host of tax reduction measures, provide a \$500 per child tax credit for families, tax-free education savings accounts to help parents afford college and a reduction in capital gains taxes to make it easier to save for retirement.

"In short, the Taxpayer Relief Act includes real help for Americans in every stage of their lives, from childhood through retirement."

He said, "As we celebrate Independence Day, I hope all Georgians will join in the call for meaningful, fair tax relief for all Americans."

* U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Chattanooga, also wrote about tax relief in his July 4th column.

He said, "Because this is a big, complicated effort and there are some disagreements over details, there are bound to be some bumps in the road before we get to our destination. But the Taxpayer Relief Act ... is a big step in the right direction."

Chattanooga Free Press, July 6, 1997

Rep. Wamp said, "This reform involves many details. But the bottom line is really quite simple. You keep more of the money you earn. You -- not some government bureaucrat in Washington -- decide how it is spent."

The congressman said, "Another good thing about this bill is that it returns to the American people more than one third of the 1993 tax increase -- the largest in history -- that was passed by one vote in the last Democratic Congress.

"Along with the balanced budget plan, this helps our country to move in the right direction -- toward a streamlined government that leaves more resources and power in the hands of the people back home."

But, Rep. Wamp warned, "Some of the very same people who brought you the 1993 tax hike are fighting our 1997 tax relief effort -- and they are using misleading and confusing statements.

"You've probably heard the claims that the bill is just tax breaks for 'the rich.' Actually, however, three-fourths of the relief goes to working people."

Democrats aren't buying that, as Rob Wells, the Associated Press's tax writer, wrote recently. He said, "More than routine Washington finger-pointing, the debate over who benefits from the tax-cut bills ... goes to the question of whether the public perceives the tax package as fair.

"It's a debate almost certain to be a major theme in the 1998 midterm (congressional) elections."

Mr. Wells added, "Independent economists, whose opinions vary on the dispute, agree that distribution tables produced by either side are rough estimates at best."

Rep. Wamp said, "Even though there are disagreements that we'll have to work through, Republicans in Congress and President Clinton now have the same goal: producing the tax relief that the American people need and deserve. ...

"We've made a good start toward accomplishing something that will be good for millions of Americans. Let's make sure we finish the job!"

* The Federal Election Commission (FEC) has submitted a report to Congress on the impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, more commonly known as the "Motor Voter" law. The law has been a frequent target of Sen. Coverdell, who contends it is an unfunded mandate forced on the states.

The FEC reported 142,995,856 registered voters in 1997, or 72.77 percent of the voting age population, the "highest percentage of voter registration in any election since 1960, when reliable records were first available."

Voter registration in the 44 states covered by the act, including Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama, rose in 1996 by 1.82 percent over 1992.

But the number of Americans who voted in 1996 declined by more than 5 percent from 1992, the first presidential election since 1972-- when the vote was extended to 18-21 year-olds -- that voter registration rose while turnout declined.

Chattanooga Free Press, July 6, 1997

Based on problems reported by the states, FEC has made recommendations to Congress to improve the law's administration. The executive summary of the report, with supporting data, is available at FEC's Internet site at <http://www.fec.gov>.

Also available at the site are two petitions seeking a rule banning or further restricting "soft money" political contributions, funds raised and spent outside the restrictions of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

One of the petitions was filed by President Clinton; the other was filed by five members of Congress, including Rep. Wamp.

Comments on the petitions should be addressed to Susan Propper, Assistant General Counsel, FEC, 999 E Street NW, Washington, D.C., 20463; faxed to (202) 219-3923; or Internet e-mailed to softmoney fec.gov with the person's name, postal address and e-mail address. Comments are due by July 12.

GRAPHIC: Victor Miller

Sen. Paul Coverdell

Rep. Zach Wamp

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 9, 1997

The Atlanta Journal, May 8, 1997

THE SUN-HERALD, BILOXI-GULFPORT, MISS.

Former President Ronald Reagan used to rail against "welfare queens," women who drove to the store in Cadillacs to buy steaks with food stamps.

Now Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice is frightened by "welfare voters," people who register to vote while registering for welfare under the National Voters Registration Act of 1993, better known as the motor voter law.

For all the inspiration of his "Morning in America" television commercials, Reagan's exploitation of minority women on welfare smacked of racist rhetoric.

And for all his "Positive Mississippi Spoken Here" signposts, Fordice is determined to use a similar slur to maintain a dual system of registration that keeps voters segregated at the polls in Mississippi.

Of course, the governor had help. One stubborn-beyond-belief committee chairman, state Rep. Bill Denny, single-handedly kept the 1997 Legislature from qualifying Mississippians registered under motor voter to vote not only in federal elections, but in local and state elections as well, throwing the municipal election cycle that began this month in jeopardy.

By his opposition, and by injecting a term such as "welfare voter" into the matter, Fordice makes it harder for those of good will and more moderate views to stand by him, much less stand up for him.

High-paid aides

FLORENCE MORNING NEWS, FLORENCE, S.C.

South Carolina Gov. David Beasley, who makes \$ 106,078 a year, has five top aides who bring home more dollars than half the nation's governors. In the 2 1/2 years Beasley has been in office, the pay for these positions has gone up 22 percent. At the same time Beasley raised these salaries, he told most state agencies to cut their budgets by 5 percent. . . .

Under Beasley's predecessor, Carroll Campbell, the governor's legislative affairs position paid \$ 63,652; under Beasley, the pay is \$ 91,800. Beasley's chief of staff makes \$ 96,900, nearly \$ 9,000 more than under Campbell. Beasley's legal counsel, communications and finance aides make \$ 91,800 each ---increases of \$ 15,000 or more ---and his press secretary takes home \$ 67,600. Previously, that position paid \$ 44,000. . . .

The governor should rethink the pay increases that went along with reorganizing the executive branch and hold the line for the duration of his time as governor. South Carolina is a relatively small state, and, though not the poorest, it is by far not the richest.

Governor, we're disappointed. We expected better judgment from you.

AROUND THE NATION Awesome generosity
SOUTH COUNTY JOURNAL, KENT, WASH.

Sometimes an event happens that is so wonderful in its simplicity that you can almost hear a collective "Wow" from coast to coast. That's what we think of the offer by an anonymous woman to give \$ 2,000 cash to each family flooded out in towns on the Red River. Wow.

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April 29, 1997

BILLY TAUZIN

TYPE: PRESS RELEASE

LENGTH: 510 words

HEADLINE: MOTOR VOTER REFORMS NEEDED

BODY:

WASHINGTON (April 29, 1997) -- Saving that he wants to "tune-up - the nation's motor voter law, not junk it, U.S. Rep. Billy Tauzin (R- LA) has Introduced Legislation to reform the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Under Congressman Tauzin's proposal, H.R. 1139, individuals registering to vote under the so-called motor voter law would have to prove their identity and citizenship before being placed on the voting rolls for federal elections. The legislation, known as the Ballot Security Act of 1997, also permits states to require a photo ID before anyone can vote in federal elections.

"Many states, including Louisiana, have been plagued by problems since the motor voter law went into effect a few years ago," Congressman Tauzin explained. "We all want 100 percent participation in the electoral process, but we should have zero tolerance for fraud and abuse."

Recently, the widely-respected Lake Charles American Press tested the motor voter law by registering scores of fictitious residents in Louisiana. In one case, even was given a voter registration card.

Clearly, this investigative series demonstrated how easy it is to commit fraud under the existing law." Congressman Tauzin continued. "Today our own immigration and Naturalization Service no longer accepts registration cards as proof of citizenship at the borders. That should tell you we've got a serious problem nationwide. In all honesty, how can we encourage people to vote if their vote doesn't mean anything? It's time for Congress to take steps to safeguard the integrity of federal elections.

In Louisiana. many state officials agree that changes the law are needed Alan Elkins, state assistant commissioner of elections, said loopholes in the motor voter act are " one of the biggest problems we have."

Congressman Tauzin's reform measure would also allow states to require a picture identification before anyone is allowed to vote in a federal election. Two years ago, Louisiana tried to establish such a requirement but the U.S. Justice Department turned down the request. Under the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Louisiana is still one of eight states which must get clearance from Washington before making any changes in their election laws.

"Today people have to show a photo ID to check in baggage at airports or to cash checks. In many case, they even have to show a photo ID to buy cigarettes. Yet many states, like Louisiana, can not require a photo ID before people vote

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in federal elections. That's crazy. It's time change the law." Congressman Tauzin added.

On Monday, the Louisiana House of Representatives voted 79- 16 in favor of a bill requiring that voters produce photo identification when they go to the polls, but Congressman Tauzin said a change in the federal motor voter law may also be necessary for the requirement to go into effect.

CONTACT: KEN JOHNSON (202) 225-4031

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 1, 1997

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June 19, 1997

JOHN MCGARRY

TYPE: PRESS RELEASE

LENGTH: 687 words

HEADLINE: IMPACT OF NATL. VOTE REGISTRATION ACT CONTAINED IN FEC REPORT TO CONGRESS

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Election Commission today approved a report to Congress and the President on the impact of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993, often referred to as the "Motor Voter" law.

States reported 142,995,856 registered voters in 1996, amounting to 72.77 percent of the voting age population. This is the highest percentage of voter registration in any election since 1960, when reliable records were first available. The report noted that voter registration in those states covered by the NVRA rose in 1996 by 1.82 percentage points over 1992, the previous comparable election. The total nationwide increase in registered voters from 1992 to 1996 was 9,183,680.

The report also notes that the number of Americans actually voting in 1996 declined by over 5 percentage points from 1992, marking the first Presidential election since 1972 - when the franchise was extended to those 18 - 21 years of age - that voter registration rose while turnout declined.

Highlights of the report which covers 1995-96, the first two years in which the new law was in effect, include:

- Motor vehicle offices generated the most voter registration applications, 33.1 percent.
- Postcard registration accounted for almost a third of applications, at 29.7 percent.
- Registration drives, deputy registers, and in-person registrations accounted for 26.1 percent of all applications.
- All other agencies mandated by the Act supplied a total of 11.1 percent of total voter registration applications. Public assistance agencies supplied 6.3 percent; agencies designated by the states supplied 4.2 percent, disability service agencies supplied 4 percent; and armed forces recruitment offices supplied 2 percent.
- One-third of all total voter registration applications were changes of name or address.
- A total of 8,723,301 names were deleted from registration lists under the new list verification procedures of the law, while another 7,083,794

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registrants were declared "inactive" and will be removed after 1999 if they fail to vote in that election.

Based on problems reported by the states to the FEC's Office of Election Administration, the Commission has made three recommendations for improving the administration of the NVRA:

- * "that states, which do not require all or part of the applicant's Social Security number, voluntary (1) amend their election codes to require only the last four digits from all new voter registration applicants, and (2) endeavor to obtain that same item of information from all current registered voters;

- * "that states, which have not yet done so, voluntary (1) develop and implement a statewide computerized voter registration database; (2) ensure that all local registration offices are computerized; and (3) link their statewide computerized system, where feasible, with the computerized systems of the collateral public agencies relevant to the NVRA (motor vehicle offices, public assistance offices, etc.); and

- * "that the US. Postal Service (1) create a new class of mail for official election material that encompasses all mail items requisite to the NVRA and provide the most favorable reduced rates affordable for the first class treatment of such mailings; and (2) provide space in their postal lobbies free of charge to state and local election officials for voter registration material"

This report, entitled "The Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Elections for Federal Office, 1994-1996," is the second in a series of reports to Congress, as required by law. Copies are available from the FEC Press Office, Public Records Office, Public Information Office, and the Office of Election Administration. The executive summary of the report, along with the supporting data, from five tables within the report will be available on the Commissions Web site - [http:// www-fec.gov](http://www-fec.gov) - after June 20.

CONTACT: RON HARRIS SHARON SNYDER IAN STIRTON KELLY HUFF

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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