CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

1. Bill number: Not yet assigned.


3. Bill status: As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration on February 18, 1993.

4. Bill purpose: The bill would create a national system of voter registration procedures for elections for federal office. Responsibility for implementing the system would fall largely to the states, with the federal government responsible for enforcement, as well as some financial and technical assistance.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STATES

Under the national system of voter registration, most states (except those with election day registration and those with no registration requirement at all) would be required to provide the following methods of registration:

Motor/voter.–When someone applies for a driver's license (new, renewal, or change of address) at the state motor vehicle authority, the application procedure would have to include the opportunity to register to vote. An individual would have to decline in writing on an application form to avoid registering by this means, or would have to sign an attestation, under penalty of perjury, that the individual is eligible to register to vote.

Mail registration.–Each state would make available through various sources a form, prescribed by the Federal Election Commission (FEC), that applicants could complete and mail to the election official to register for federal elections.

Agency registration.–Each state would have to designate some state and federal offices as well as private sector locations (such as public libraries, unemployment offices, banks, fishing and hunting license bureaus, or post offices) to distribute and collect applications for voter registration. Such locations would then forward the applications to the appropriate election official.

Currently, the federal government has little involvement with voter registration. Each state has its own laws governing registration, and in practice, registration practices vary widely even among local election jurisdictions within a state. The bill would mandate that states provide the specific registration methods consistently in all jurisdictions.

In addition, the bill would mandate that any state programs used to update voter registration lists shall be uniform and nondiscriminatory and may not remove someone from the list for not voting. The bill would permit a state, if it determines a voter has moved, to remove the voter from the list only after sending a forwardable notice with a return card that would allow the voter to confirm the correct address.

Finally, each state would have to designate a chief state official responsible for implementing the state's functions under the bill.