

# THE CENTER FOR VOTING AND DEMOCRACY

December 4, 2000

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To Members of Congress,

Despite the ongoing uncertainty surrounding this year's presidential election, we believe one result is crystal clear: the need to examine the rules and practices of our election process and consider reforms to restore confidence in voting. Controversies over the ballot-counts in Florida have resulted in partisan divisions, but conservatives, liberals and moderates alike can agree that it is time for a comprehensive examination of our electoral process. We must ensure that we have modern election systems that better serve both those who vote and the many — particularly among young people — who do not.

Representatives Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Jim Leach (R-IA) have introduced bipartisan legislation that puts an array of voting system reforms on the national table. HR 5631, the "Federal Elections Review Commission Act," was crafted in a nonpartisan spirit. As with any group concerned about a fair and effective electoral process, we have our own views on which areas mentioned in the bill are most significant. We suspect that there may be disagreement about priorities, but believe it highly important to have a comprehensive analysis of elections rather than a piecemeal one. If we change one electoral law, it could have an impact on others.

HR 5631 would establish a 12-member committee to examine the federal election process and make recommendations on the advisability and feasibility of numerous proposals, including those surrounding:

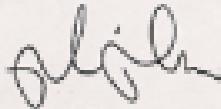
- Polling place accessibility and times
- Ballot design and voting machines, including uniformity
- Electoral irregularities, redress and options
- Mail-in and Internet voting
- Voter registration
- Presidential debates and ballot access
- The Electoral College and the Presidential primary process
- Winner-take-all elections and instant runoff voting
- Limiting campaign seasons

Thomas Jefferson believed in the need to re-examine the workings of our democracy each generation. We urge Congress to heed Jefferson's advice by passing the DeFazio-Leach bill, and establishing this blue-ribbon commission to assess our nation's voting processes. Our country can withstand many things, but it cannot survive citizens losing faith in elections.

Sincerely,



John B. Anderson  
President



Rob Richie  
Executive Director