

CRS Report for Congress

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Voter Eligibility Verification Pilot Program

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H.R. 3485, the Campaign Reform and Election Integrity Act of 1998, was introduced in the House on March 18, 1998; it was amended and reported by the House Oversight Committee the same day. Title V of the legislation establishes a pilot program to allow election officials to verify the citizenship of voter registration applicants, amends the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 by adding a citizenship question to the national voter registration form, and establishes procedures for maintaining voter registration lists.

Voter Eligibility Verification Pilot Program

This legislation proposes a program for insuring that those who participate in the electoral process are qualified to vote by virtue of citizenship. The Attorney General and the Commissioner of Social Security are responsible for developing a pilot program to allow election officials to verify the citizenship of voter registration applicants using the last four digits of an applicant's social security number. Title V would require the following:

- The information may be used only for verifying a person's eligibility to vote. The legislation explicitly prohibits using the citizen verification process for any other purpose.
- In instances where citizenship cannot be confirmed, the election official is required to notify the voter registration applicant in writing so that erroneous information may be corrected.
- The program is to be voluntary and nondiscriminatory. At a minimum, the pilot program must be instituted in California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois.
- The program is to expire on September 30, 2001. The Attorney General and Commissioner of Social Security will report to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Ways and Means on the program, including an assessment of the program's safeguards against discriminatory practices, the extent of fraudulent attesting to citizenship, the reliability of Social Security records for determining

citizenship, and the program's suitability for implementation nationally, including a cost estimate.

Other Measures to Protect Election Integrity

The bill amends the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 by requiring a change to the mail voter registration form developed under the act. The legislation proposes adding two boxes to the mail voter registration form on which an applicant must indicate whether or not he or she is a citizen.

The legislation establishes a procedure for election officials to verify the address of registered voters who have not voted in two consecutive general elections, by sending a notice to the voter. Election officials may place a voter on an inactive list if the voter does not notify the official of intent to remain eligible.