The Interstate Voter Assistance Act

BACKGROUND

Every five years, 90 million eligible voters move and it is estimated that over 20 million voting-age Americans move each year. This creates a significant challenge for election officials attempting to maintain accurate voter rolls.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) restricts election officials' ability to efficiently identify and cancel voters who move, prohibiting automatic cancellation when a voter previously registered in one state moves and registers in a new state. Federal law allows immediate removal only at the voter's request. This model policy creates a process for applicants to request cancellation when registering in a new state and authorizes the transmission of this request to the state where he was previously registered. States like Florida,[1] Texas,[2] and Virginia[3] already treat such information as a voter's written request to cancel their registration. This policy enables election officials to take prompt action to ensure more accurate voter registration records.

KEY PROVISIONS

- Improves the accuracy and integrity of state voter registration lists by facilitating the exchange of information between states about voters who move.
- Updates the voter registration form to require an applicant to indicate if he has been previously registered to vote and provide the prior address, consent to the cancellation of his prior registration, and authorize the current state to forward the request to cancel to the prior state.
- Requires election officials to transmit information regarding an applicant's previous registration to the chief election official, who then transmits this information to the state where an applicant was previously registered.
- Requires public reporting of the number of notices sent to other states, similar notices received by the current state, and the actions taken by the current state upon receipt of similar notices.
- Treats a notice of registration in another state as a request to cancel in the current state and requires removal of that person from the voter registration list.

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1 Fla. Stat. Ann. § 98.045(2)(b) ("Information received by a voter registration official from an election official in another state indicating that a registered voter in this state has registered to vote in that other state shall be considered as a written request from the voter to have the voter's name removed from the statewide voter registration system).

2 Tex. Elec. Code § 16.031a)(5) ("The registrar shall cancel a voter's registration immediately on receipt of…notice from a voter registration official in another state that the voter has registered to vote outside this state.").

3 Va. Code § 24.2-427(B)(iv) ("The general registrar shall promptly cancel the registration of…all persons for whom a notice has been received, signed by the voter, or from the registration official of another jurisdiction that the voter has moved from the Commonwealth…").