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NEW GAO REPORT FINDS THAT BETTER VOTING TECHNOLOGIES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF UNCOUNTED BALLOTS

Report Also Finds That Minority Voters Have High Undercount Rates

Rep. Henry A. Waxman today released a new GAO report finding that demographic factors and the type of voting technologies used by voters made a significant difference in the percentage of uncounted ballots in the 2000 presidential election.

The report found that voters using punch-card machines had the highest percentage of uncounted ballots and that switching from punch-card machines to optical scan machines that allow voters to correct errors could prevent hundreds of thousands of uncounted ballots. The GAO report also found that minority voters were more likely to have higher rates of uncounted ballots than other voters.

"The GAO findings show us that the current situation is unacceptable," said Congressman Waxman. "It is unfair that minority voters are more likely to have their ballot discarded. And it is wrong that some voters are forced to vote on old machines that cause their votes to be discarded."

Rep. Waxman is a cosponsor of election reform legislation, H.R. 1170, introduced by Rep. John Conyers. "This new GAO report underscores the need to pass an election reform bill," said Rep. Waxman. "By establishing national standards to ensure that every vote is counted, the Conyers legislation would solve many of the problems identified in the GAO report."

A summary of the GAO report and the full report are available at the website of the minority office of the Committee on Government Reform: www.house.gov/reform/min.