

CHA Markup on H.R. 1 | February 26, 2019
Ranking Member Rodney Davis
Opening Statement

The greatest threat to our nation's election system is partisanship. H.R. 1 was drafted to serve the special interests of Democrats and the outside organizations that support the Democratic Party. It was created without input from any Republican Members of Congress and without the consultation of officials or election administrators. In fact, there isn't a single Republican cosponsor.

H.R. 1 is a prime example of the Democratic party telling states that the federal government knows better than they do, and the Washington, D.C. swamp is taking over the country's election system.

This legislation overreaches our constitution. It violates a citizen's basic free speech rights under the First Amendment, such as expressing displeasure with electoral process by not participating.

H.R. 1 also overreaches our constitution by taking the power away from states that decide how their elections should be administered, states that know their residents' election needs much better than a federal bureaucracy does. H.R. 1 forces a nationwide approach that will be costly and ineffective.

H.R. 1 will weaken our voting system by centralizing the voting process creating unsurmountable vulnerability.

This bill disregards safeguards upon implementing many new registration and voting practices. We should absolutely be in favor of increasing access to polls, but without adding the necessary checks and balances to ensure these practices are protected, we are opening the door for fraud in our election system.

A few fraudulent votes can change the outcome of a single election, something I can personally attest to.

Out of everyone here on this Committee, I had the closest election results in the 2018 election and probably every other election of my career, since I represent such a bipartisan district.

In the 2018 election, I won by 0.8 points – 2,058 votes. There's not as much room for error in my district as there is for some of you, like Congresswoman Marcia Fudge who won by 64 points or you Chairperson Lofgren who won by 48 points.

When you live in a competitive district, every single vote makes a difference between winning and losing. If we pass these new voter registration practices in H.R. 1 without creating safeguards around the practices to ensure we eliminate the possibility of fraudulent voting, we risk taking away the choice of the American people who voted fairly.

If we leave any room for fraud in the system, we take away the voice of each American voter, American voters who have the constitutional right to choose their congressional representative.

In the case of *Reynolds vs. Sims*, the Supreme Court stated, “the right of suffrage can be denied by a debasement or dilution of the weight of a citizen’s vote just as effectively as by wholly prohibiting the free exercise of the franchise.”

Democrats boast that H.R. 1 is for the people, yet they’re failing the people by not doing their due diligence to ensure H.R. 1 will protect each American’s vote.

When H.R. 1 was introduced, it was referred to 10 House committees who were each designated to have jurisdiction over areas of the legislation. Out of those 10, only 5 Committees have held hearings on H.R. 1, and out of those 5, only CHA has a markup.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi has made it clear that they want to advance H.R. 1 as soon as possible, even sending out a dear colleague letter declaring it would advance to the floor this month.

My colleagues across the aisle insist that H.R. 1 is their serious effort for election reform, yet they are imprudently rushing to get this 571-page bill to the floor without ensuring the committees of jurisdiction have time to properly review and amend it.

This process of reviewing H.R. 1 has been so rushed, we still have no CBO score to determine how much this mammoth legislation is going to cost, not even a preliminary estimate.

H.R. 1’s campaign match provision alone will be an outrageous, mandatory cost to the American taxpayers. H.R. 1 is creating public subsidies through the 6 to 1 government match on small-donor campaign contributions of up to \$200. For every \$200, the federal government will pay \$1,200 of taxpayer money to a politician’s campaign.

The Democratic Members of this Committee received roughly \$800,000 dollars in small dollar contributions this last election. If H.R. 1 had been in effect, they would have received a total of almost \$5 million dollars to go to their campaigns. We are now subsidizing private money with taxpayer funds through campaign subsidies.

Imagine if every Member of Congress – not counting all the candidates in each congressional race, just the current 435 Members – receives just \$1 million dollars in matched funds from the federal government; that’s close to half of a billion dollars of taxpayer money going to just the incumbent politicians’ campaigns. Welcome to campaign finance socialism.

Election reform should be bipartisan. I hope my colleagues on this panel will consider voting in favor of the amendments we are introducing today, so that we may put forth legislation that is meant to serve the people and not serve the interest of one party.

Every American’s vote should be counted and protected.