



RUTH Y. GOLDWAY
COMMISSIONER

June 9, 2009

The Honorable Robert A. Brady
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
1310 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Brady:

I am writing to support H.R. 1604, the Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2009.

In my testimony before the House Committee on Administration on October 16, 2007, I pointed out that the U.S. Postal Service provides a reliable and trusted means of voting for many Americans. Further, the Postal Service is actively working with State and local election officials to make the Vote by Mail process simpler and more accountable.

Absentee ballots account for an increasing percentage of votes cast nationally, but there is great disparity in rates of participation between states which provide for no-excuse or universal absentee voting and those which require particular justification for each election. As I said in my testimony:

“Offering citizens the option of voting by mail provides significant advantages, including the potential to increase voter turnout for national, state and local elections. Voters would not need to take time off from work, find transportation, locate the right polling place, get baby-sitters or rush through critical yet sometimes complicated ballot initiatives. (...) Voters appreciate the opportunity to read a ballot slowly in the privacy of their homes, and to drop it in the mail, exercising their voting franchise thoughtfully and carefully.”

In my home state of California which offers no-excuse or universal absentee voting, approximately half the votes in statewide elections are cast by mail, a percentage that has been steadily growing over time. In the June 2008 California primary and the November 2008 California general elections, for example, 58.71 percent and 41.64 percent of all votes respectively were Votes by Mail.

Legislation extending universal access to absentee voting in national elections beyond the 29 states where it is already in effect would increase participation, interest and greater confidence in the electoral process.

Having served for eleven years on the Postal Regulatory Commission, I am familiar with the efficiency and reliability of the mail service provided by the Postal Service. I strongly support giving citizens the option to cast mail-in ballots as a secure and efficiency alternative to in-person voting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Y. Goldway". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Ruth Y. Goldway

Ms. Goldway is writing in her individual capacity as a Postal Regulatory Commissioner.