ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 97

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO
District 2 (Atlantic)
Assemblyman ROY FREIMAN
District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)
Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI
District 33 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle

SYNOPSIS

Urges Congress to appropriate additional federal funds for election security and voting equipment purposes.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to appropriate additional federal funds for election security and voting equipment purposes.

WHEREAS, Under the "Help America Vote Act of 2002," Pub.L.107-252 (HAVA), since 2003 Congress has appropriated more than $3.5 billion in federal funds to modernize election administration in this country; and

WHEREAS, By 2016, the vast majority of these federal funds, or about $3.28 billion, has been awarded to the states and territories as grants to replace outdated election machine technology with modern voting equipment, improve election administration, and meet other HAVA requirements for voting systems and voter access; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, Congress appropriated an additional $380 million to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to award grants to the states and territories for various election security purposes including, but not limited to, ensuring that voting equipment produces a voter-verified paper record, implementing post-election audit systems, and upgrading voting equipment and systems to address vulnerabilities to cyber attacks; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey will receive about $9.8 million of these 2018 HAVA funds, which the State must match with $487 thousand of its own funds, for a total of $10.2 million; and

WHEREAS, While this new federal funding allocation is a step in the right direction, New Jersey and other states are finding that the costs of replacing the now outdated voting machines originally purchased in the early 2000s far outweigh the current allocation amount; and

WHEREAS, In this State, there is a need to replace the aging voting machines in most of its 21 counties with a modern voting system that produces a voter-verified paper record, protects against cyber attacks, and thereby increases voter confidence in the electoral process; and

WHEREAS, In the face of this pressing need to upgrade the election infrastructure in this State and across the United States, Congress should prioritize funding for election security and voting equipment purposes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House urges the United States Congress to appropriate additional federal funds under the Help America Vote Act to the states and territories for election security and voting equipment purposes.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the United States Congress elected from this State.

STATEMENT

This resolution urges the United States Congress to appropriate additional federal funds to the states and territories for election security and voting equipment purposes.

From 2003 through 2016, Congress has appropriated more than $3.5 billion in federal funds to modernize election administration in this country. Under the "Help America Vote Act of 2002" (HAVA), the vast majority of these federal funds has been awarded as grants to the states and territories to replace outdated election machine technology with modern voting equipment, improve election administration, and other required purposes. In 2018, Congress appropriated an additional $380 million to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to award grants to the states and territories to ensure that voting equipment produces a voter-verified paper record, implement post-election audit systems, and upgrade voting equipment and systems to address vulnerabilities to cyber attacks. New Jersey will receive about $9.8 million of these 2018 HAVA funds, for a total of $10.2 million after a $487 thousand match amount is added by the State.

However, New Jersey and other states are finding that the costs of replacing the now outdated voting machines originally purchased in the early 2000s far outweigh the current allocation amount. In this State, there is a need to replace the aging voting machines in most of its 21 counties with a modern voting system that produces a voter-verified paper record, protects against cyber attacks, and thereby increases voter confidence in the electoral process.