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REP. WAXMAN RELEASES FIRST NATIONAL STUDY ON INCOME AND RACIAL DISPARITIES IN VOTE COUNTING IN THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Today, Rep. Henry A. Waxman and 18 other members of Congress released the first national study examining income and racial differences in vote counting in the 2000 presidential election.

“The report finds wide disparities in the undercount,” said Rep. Waxman. “The problem isn’t confined to Florida. The disenfranchisement of low-income, minority voters occurs nationwide.”

The report finds that on average, voters in low-income, high-minority congressional districts were over three times more likely to have their votes discarded than voters in affluent, low-minority districts. Voters in some districts were 20 times as likely to have their votes discarded as voters in other districts.

The report also finds that better voting technology significantly reduced uncounted votes in low-income, high minority districts, as well as significantly narrowing the disparity in uncounted votes between low-income, high-minority districts and affluent, low-minority districts.

“This problem is an urgent national priority,” said Rep. Waxman. “The technology is available to make certain that everyone’s vote counts. It is intolerable to allow the disenfranchisement of poor and minority voters to continue.”

The report analyzed results from 40 congressional districts in 20 states. Twenty of the congressional districts have high poverty rates and a high minority population, and 20 of the districts have low poverty rates and a small minority population. The report analyzes the percentage of uncounted votes for president in each of the 40 districts and compares the percentages of uncounted votes in the two types of districts. The report also investigates the impact of different voting machines on the undercount.