

LES AUCOIN
1ST DISTRICT, OREGON



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

May 7, 1981

Dear Colleague:

On Wednesday, May 13, as an amendment to the Voting Rights Act, we will introduce a pragmatic, practical and non-intrusive solution to the problem caused by early release of Presidential election results.

As recent public opinion polls have shown, many registered voters in the West did not vote because they were discouraged by early projections and by early concessions.

Under our plan, the states would be free to decide when to open the polls. We would mandate that all polls close no later than 11 p.m. EST, and would prohibit release by election officials of presidential election results until all polls are closed.

The advantages of this approach are many. It does not change election day to a Sunday, where it would compete with religious and recreational activities. It does not declare a voting holiday: the cost of shutting down businesses for another holiday is clearly prohibitive. Nor does it involve a complex, unwieldy plan for split-day voting or impose a uniform opening time that would open western polls as early as 5 a.m.

In our own state of Oregon, this approach has been enthusiastically received, by publishers, legislators, and groups such as the League of Women Voters. We realize that 11 p.m. closing might cause some inconvenience to voters in the Alaskan time zone (where a great deal of the voting is by absentee ballot). But we point out that polls in Hawaii already close at 6 p.m. and that a similar closing time in Alaska will allow the polls to stay open there by at least 10 hours.

We commend this approach to your consideration. If you would like to join us in this effort, contact Bob Crane of Les AuCoin's staff at 50855.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

LES AUCOIN

JIM WEAVER

RON WYDEN