



# Congresswoman Susan A. Davis

Representing the 53<sup>rd</sup> District in San Diego, California

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## HOUSE PANEL PASSES REP. SUSAN DAVIS'S NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE BALLOT LEGISLATION

*The Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act would allow all eligible voters an option to vote by mail*

WASHINGTON – The bill by Rep. Susan Davis to lift restrictions for voting by mail in some states was approved by the House Administration Committee. The Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act (H.R. 281) was reported to the full House on a voice vote.

**“This straightforward bill would simply give any eligible voter the option of voting by absentee ballot,”** said Davis, a member of the committee. **“No longer would an antiquated patchwork of state laws prevent voters from voting because they have work, family or other commitments. We will level the playing field by allowing voters in the states that do not have No Excuse Absentee Voting to catch up to the twenty-nine that do.”**

Currently, there are twenty-two states that restrict an eligible voter’s ability to vote by mail, also known as absentee. These states restrict vote by mail privileges to certain categories of people, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities or an illness, or those in the military. Twenty-eight states give eligible voters the option of voting by mail for any reason. Oregon conducts its elections entirely by mail.

In many states, excuses such as having to work, taking care of a child, or serving on a jury are not considered valid reasons to be able to vote absentee.

Davis accepted two amendments to her bill. One amendment extended the effective date of the bill until 2010 to give states time to conform to the new law. However, Davis expressed her hope that states would attempt to implement the spirit of her bill for the upcoming election.

The other amendment required the implementation of a signature verification system, a security measure which is already used by many states that allow no-excuse absentee voting.

Davis is also sponsoring bills to require free postage for mailing absentee ballots and the tracking of absentee ballots from mail box to election office.

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