

But Oregon Deputy Secretary of State Paddy J. McGuire (D) said he believes the intent of such a message is not to protect the homeland but to "scare people away from the polls."

Some Democrats are suspicious of the timing of the announcements, noting that warnings about an election-season threat came on April 19, when Bush was close to his low in the polls; on Aug. 1, right after the Democratic National Convention; and last week, as the president's post-National Republican Convention bounce ebbed.

In a statement last week, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (Mass.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, warned that it is possible for terrorism response plans created in the name of election security to discourage voting and "become a thinly veiled partisan tactic to tilt the elections."

Spokesmen for Ashcroft and Ridge emphasized that the effort to secure the election was initiated and led by the states, which administer elections. Federal law normally prohibits the presence of armed federal agents near polling sites. They also noted that the effort is supported by the National Governors Association, chaired by Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner (D), whose aides have said it is vital to address the issue of election security in a post-Sept. 11, 2001, era.

"We do not do politics at Homeland Security," Ridge spokesman Brian Roehrkaske said.

Nevertheless, partisan tensions were apparent as officials of the NGA and the National Association of Secretaries of State and homeland security experts sparred last week over the timing and content of a public announcement.

Rebecca Vigil-Giron (D), New Mexico secretary of state and president of the secretaries of state association, said the directive sent out by her organization to the states to step up preparations to safeguard national balloting has been "blown way out of proportion." She said election officials must plan a coordinated response to an election disrupted by a terrorist attack, but she said, "I want to make very sure that these plans don't look anything like voter suppression."

Still, civil rights organizations are worried. People for the American Way Foundation issued a report concluding that various efforts in the name of combating voter fraud have replaced Jim Crow-era laws restricting ballot access as a way to hold down minority voting.

Elliott Minberg, the foundation's legal director, said he suspected that efforts to protect against terrorism, could have the same effect. "The devil is in the details," he said, "and I want to be sure that this is not done in a way that scares people away from the polls."

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to promote greater civic awareness among all people of the United States. This issue is particularly important at a time when voter participation has been decreasing. The Census Bureau found that only 46% of eligible voters participated in the 2002 elections.

This is not acceptable. Full participation in the electoral process by all Americans is truly a bipartisan concern. We are a society that values democracy. One of the most basic of all rights in a free and democratic society is the right to participate. Exercising the right to vote makes us productive members of society and contributes to the substance of our laws and char-

acter. The fact of the matter is clear; the right to vote is the most basic constitutional act of citizenship.

As a society, we must take steps to raise civic awareness and to develop strategies to promote civic responsibility. Too many people have shed blood and died for us to have this right. While promoting civic awareness, we must also ensure that there are no barriers to the process. In 2000, a number of people went to the polls, but their votes were not counted due to faulty equipment and human error. This must never happen in the world's greatest democracy.

Again, I rise in support of this legislation because it represents progress in addressing voter complacency.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to again thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) for their introduction and support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 796.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 796.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN RESTORATION PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4470) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program from fiscal year 2005 to 2010, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4470

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN RESTORATION PROGRAM.

(a) STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE.—For purposes of carrying out section 121 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1273), the Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana, basin stakeholders conference convened on February 25, 2002, shall be treated as being a

management conference convened under section 320 of such Act (33 U.S.C. 1330).

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—The first sentence of section 121(f)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1273(f)(1)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", \$19,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, and \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2010".

SEC. 2. TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

The second section 121 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1274; relating to wet weather watershed projects) is redesignated as section 122.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4470, to reauthorize the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Program. Working with the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) and other Members, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) developed legislation during his very first year in the Congress to authorize EPA to help people in Louisiana and Mississippi address pollution problems affecting Lake Pontchartrain.

Their legislation, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Act, was enacted into law as title V of the Estuaries and Clean Water Act of 2000. Now, 4 years later, it is now time to reauthorize Lake Pontchartrain Basin Program.

H.R. 4470, introduced by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON) the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN), would reauthorize the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program for an addition will 5 years.

I want to commend all of the sponsors for their efforts to restore the ecological health of Lake Pontchartrain, and I urge all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4470, a bill that would reauthorize appropriations for the Environmental Protection Agency Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program.

Since its authorization in 2000, this program has been helpful in coordinating restoration work for Lake Pontchartrain, located in Southeastern Louisiana. This legislation would extend the authorization of \$20 million annually through 2010 for restoration projects and studies recommended by the Lake Pontchartrain Management Conference, as well as public education projects to inform the local community of public health concerns and