

BRENNAN  
CENTER  
FOR JUSTICE

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VIA FACSIMILE

June 25, 2007

**RE: Supporting H.R. 1281 (Deceptive Practices and  
Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2007)**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, I write to urge you to support the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2007, H.R. 1281, introduced by Representatives Emanuel and Conyers. Among other things, this bill would criminalize the knowing and intentional communication of false and misleading information about the time, place, or manner of elections, and the rules governing voter eligibility and voter registration. It would also ensure that voters affected by deceptive or intimidating practices are provided with correct information from a reliable source in a timely manner.

H.R. 1281 would fill a significant gap in the laws that safeguard the integrity of our elections. Unfortunately, every election cycle, many voters—disproportionately those in minority communities—are confronted with information designed to prevent them from voting or casting meaningful ballots. In 2006, voters with Latino surnames in Orange County, California were sent letters wrongly suggesting it is illegal for naturalized citizens to vote. Voters in Virginia, Colorado, and New Mexico received phone calls wrongly informing them that their polling places had changed and directing them to the wrong precinct or otherwise communicating incorrect information about where and when to vote and the requirements for voting. In 2004, fliers in African American neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Wisconsin falsely warned voters that if they had not paid their parking tickets, if they had ever been convicted of a felony, or if they had voted in any other election that year, they would be punished for going to the polls. These are not isolated incidents. They reflect a rash of voter intimidation wholly at odds with the spirit of our democracy.

These incidents are bad enough. But what's more, today in most states they are simply not against the law. Nor is there any authority charged with investigating these incidents and providing voters with corrected information. H.R. 1281 would correct these oversights, helping to ensure that ill-intentioned individuals do not effectively deprive others of their right to vote. Fairness and democracy require no less.

We therefore respectfully urge you to pass H.R. 1281.

Sincerely,



Michael Waldman  
Executive Director