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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To remove barriers to the ability of unhoused individuals to register to
vote and vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia introduced the following bill; which was referred to
the Committee on _____

A BILL

To remove barriers to the ability of unhoused individuals
to register to vote and vote in elections for Federal
office, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Unhoused Voter Opportunity Through Elections Act” or
6 the “Unhoused VOTE Act”.

7 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents of
8 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—VOTING RIGHTS OF UNHOUSED CITIZENS

Sec. 101. Voting rights of unhoused citizens.

Sec. 102. Enforcement.

Sec. 103. Relationship to Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Sec. 104. Definitions.

TITLE II—PROTECTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR PROTECTING ACCESS TO VOTING AND VOTER REGISTRATION FOR UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS

Sec. 201. Description of protections.

Sec. 202. Special requirements for voter registration.

Sec. 203. Inclusion of information on voter registration and voting in surveys
conducted by recipients of HUD homeless assistance.

TITLE III—GRANTS TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO VOTING FOR UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS

Sec. 301. Grant program described.

Sec. 302. Eligibility.

Sec. 303. Definition.

Sec. 304. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE IV—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 401. State defined.

Sec. 402. Effective date.

1 **TITLE I—VOTING RIGHTS OF** 2 **UNHOUSED CITIZENS**

3 **SEC. 101. VOTING RIGHTS OF UNHOUSED CITIZENS.**

4 No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or
5 standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or ap-
6 plied by any State or political subdivision to deny or
7 abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to
8 vote because that citizen resides at or in a nontraditional
9 abode.

10 **SEC. 102. ENFORCEMENT.**

11 (a) ACTION BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The Attorney
12 General may commence in the name of the United States

1 a civil action (including an action against a State or polit-
2 ical subdivision) for declaratory or injunctive relief against
3 a violation of this title.

4 (b) PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—A person who is
5 aggrieved by an alleged violation of this title may bring
6 a civil action in an appropriate district court for declara-
7 tory or injunctive relief with respect to the violation.

8 **SEC. 103. RELATIONSHIP TO VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965.**

9 Nothing in this title may be construed to impair any
10 right guaranteed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52
11 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.).

12 **SEC. 104. DEFINITIONS.**

13 As used in this title, the term “nontraditional abode”
14 includes—

15 (1) a supervised publicly or privately operated
16 shelter designed to provide temporary living accom-
17 modations (including welfare hotels, congregate shel-
18 ters, transitional housing, substance abuse treatment
19 facilities);

20 (2) a public or private place not designated for,
21 or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommoda-
22 tion for human beings;

23 (3) any location in which, because an individual
24 resides in the location, the individual is considered
25 to be a homeless individual for purposes of section

1 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance
2 Act (42 U.S.C. 11302); and

3 (4) in the case of a State in which an individual
4 incarcerated in a prison is eligible to register to vote
5 and vote in elections for public office, a prison.

6 **TITLE II—PROTECTIONS AND**
7 **BEST PRACTICES FOR PRO-**
8 **TECTING ACCESS TO VOTING**
9 **AND VOTER REGISTRATION**
10 **FOR UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS**

11 **SEC. 201. DESCRIPTION OF PROTECTIONS.**

12 (a) DESCRIPTION.—Title III of the Help America
13 Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21081 et seq.) is amended
14 by adding at the end the following new subtitle:

15 **“Subtitle C—Access to Voting for**
16 **Unhoused Individuals**

17 **“SEC. 321. PROMOTING USE OF DROP BOXES BY UNHOUSED**
18 **INDIVIDUALS.**

19 “(a) DROP BOX ACCESSIBILITY.—If a jurisdiction re-
20 sponsible for the administration of an election for Federal
21 office in a State permits individuals to drop off voted bal-
22 lots in the election in drop boxes, the jurisdiction shall en-
23 sure that the drop boxes are available for in-person use
24 and are accessible and clearly labeled.

1 “(b) APPLYING CRITERIA BASED ON GREATEST AC-
2 CESS BY UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS.—In establishing the
3 location, number, and time of operation of the drop boxes
4 described in subsection (a), the appropriate election offi-
5 cial of a jurisdiction which is subject to such subsection
6 shall take into account the need to provide access to such
7 drop boxes by unhoused individuals, based on consultation
8 with persons who provide services for unhoused individuals
9 and other relevant stakeholders.

10 **“SEC. 322. ACCEPTANCE OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTATION OF**
11 **RESIDENCE AND IDENTIFICATION.**

12 “(a) RESIDENCE.—

13 “(1) ATTESTATION.—If a State imposes a re-
14 quirement that an individual who desires to vote in
15 an election for Federal office in the State provide
16 the appropriate election official with documentation
17 of the individual’s residence, the State shall consider
18 the individual to meet that requirement if the indi-
19 vidual provides the official with a written attestation
20 of the individual’s residence, signed under penalty of
21 perjury.

22 “(2) USE OF SHELTER AS RESIDENCE FOR
23 VOTING PURPOSES.—A State may not prohibit an
24 individual who is residing in a homeless shelter from
25 using the shelter as the individual’s residence for

1 purposes of voting in an election for Federal office
2 which is held in the jurisdiction in which the shelter
3 is located.

4 “(b) IDENTIFICATION ISSUED BY ENTITIES OF
5 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.—If a State imposes a re-
6 quirement that an individual who desires to vote in an
7 election for Federal office in the State provide the appro-
8 priate election official with documentation of the individ-
9 ual’s identification, the State shall consider the individual
10 to meet the requirement if the individual provides the offi-
11 cial with a document containing the individual’s name
12 which is issued by an entity of the criminal justice system,
13 including a correctional facility, court, probation officer,
14 or parole officer.

15 **“SEC. 323. OUTREACH TO UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS.**

16 “(a) INFORMATION ON WEBSITES OF ELECTION OF-
17 FICIALS.—

18 “(1) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—The chief
19 State election official shall ensure that the official
20 public website of each election official of the State
21 includes an accessible, clear, and separate hyperlink
22 to simple information on how unhoused individuals
23 may register to vote and vote in elections for Fed-
24 eral office held in the State.

1 “(2) AVAILABILITY IN LANGUAGE OTHER THAN
2 ENGLISH.—If a State or political subdivision is re-
3 quired under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act
4 of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10503) to provide voting mate-
5 rials in a language other than English, the appro-
6 priate election official shall ensure that the informa-
7 tion provided under paragraph (1) is provided in
8 that language as well as English.

9 “(b) NOTIFICATION.—

10 “(1) VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES.—Not
11 later than 60 days prior to the deadline for reg-
12 istering to vote in an election for Federal office held
13 in a State, the chief State election official shall send
14 a notification of the deadline to each homeless shel-
15 ter in a jurisdiction of the State in which the elec-
16 tion will be held, local social services agencies which
17 commonly serve unhoused individuals, and other en-
18 tities which provide services to a significant popu-
19 lation of unhoused individuals in the jurisdiction.

20 “(2) DATES OF ELECTIONS.—Not later than 30
21 days prior to the date of an election for Federal of-
22 fice, the chief State election official shall send a no-
23 tification of the election to each homeless shelter in
24 a jurisdiction of the State in which the election will
25 be held, along with the other agencies and entities

1 to whom the chief State election official sent notice
2 of the registration deadline under paragraph (1).

3 **“SEC. 324. DEVELOPMENT OF BEST PRACTICES.**

4 “(a) DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICATION.—In con-
5 sultation with the United States Interagency Council on
6 Homelessness, the Commission shall develop and regularly
7 update recommendations for the best practices for State
8 and local election officials to follow to protect and promote
9 the access of unhoused individuals to voter registration
10 and voting in elections for Federal office.

11 “(b) SPECIFIC ELEMENTS.—The Commission shall
12 include in the best practices developed and updated under
13 this section—

14 “(1) methods to ensure that unhoused individ-
15 uals are aware of the procedures and locations for
16 registering to vote and voting;

17 “(2) methods to help election officials comply
18 with requirements for providing access to voter reg-
19 istration and voting for people with disabilities, in-
20 cluding requirements established and enforced by the
21 Department of Justice;

22 “(3) methods to train election officials, includ-
23 ing poll workers, in recognizing and responding to
24 the challenges faced by unhoused individuals in reg-
25 istering to vote and voting;

1 “(4) methods to ensure that individuals who are
2 not eligible to register to vote, including individuals
3 who are not citizens of the United States, and indi-
4 viduals who are eligible but who do not wish to reg-
5 ister to vote are not denied access to services pro-
6 vided by homeless shelters and local social services
7 agencies which commonly serve unhoused individ-
8 uals; and

9 “(5) such other practices as the Commission
10 considers appropriate.

11 “(c) CONSULTATION.—In developing and updating
12 the best practices under this section, the Commission shall
13 consult with individuals who have experience in being
14 unhoused and with homeless shelters and local social serv-
15 ices agencies which commonly serve unhoused individuals,
16 including shelters and agencies with experience in serving
17 unhoused individuals who are not citizens of the United
18 States.

19 “(d) DEADLINE.—The Commission shall develop the
20 first set of best practices under this section not later than
21 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Unhoused
22 VOTE Act.

23 **“SEC. 325. DEFINITIONS.**

24 “In this subtitle—

1 “(1) the term ‘homeless shelter’ means an
2 emergency shelter under section 321 of the McKin-
3 ney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
4 11351); and

5 “(2) the term ‘unhoused individual’ means a
6 homeless individual, as defined in section 103 of
7 such Act (42 U.S.C. 11302).”.

8 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT RELATING TO EN-
9 FORCEMENT.—Section 401 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 21111)
10 is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting
11 “, and subtitle C of title III.”.

12 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
13 of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items
14 relating to title III the following:

“Subtitle C—Access to Voting for Unhoused Individuals

“Sec. 321. Promoting use of drop boxes by unhoused individuals.

“Sec. 322. Acceptance of certain documentation of residence and identification.

“Sec. 323. Outreach to unhoused individuals.

“Sec. 324. Development of best practices.

“Sec. 325. Definitions.”.

15 **SEC. 202. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER REGISTRA-**
16 **TION.**

17 (a) TREATMENT OF SHELTERS AS VOTER REGISTRA-
18 TION AGENCIES.—Section 7(a)(2) of the National Voter
19 Registration Act of 1993 (52 U.S.C. 20506(a)(2)) is
20 amended—

21 (1) by striking “and” at the end of subpara-
22 graph (A);

1 (2) by striking the period at the end of sub-
2 paragraph (B) and inserting “; and”; and

3 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
4 paragraph:

5 “(C) all emergency shelters in the State under
6 section 321 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assist-
7 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 11351).”.

8 (b) PERMITTING APPLICANTS TO MARK LOCATION
9 OF RESIDENCE ON FEDERAL VOTER REGISTRATION AP-
10 PLICATION FORMS AND ALTERNATIVE FORMS USED BY
11 STATES.—Section 9(b) of the National Voter Registration
12 Act of 1993 (52 U.S.C. 20508(b)) is amended—

13 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
14 (3);

15 (2) by striking the period at the end of para-
16 graph (4) and inserting “; and”; and

17 (3) by adding at the end the following new
18 paragraph:

19 “(5) include a drawing of an intersection on
20 which the applicant may mark by hand the location
21 of the applicant’s residence, including by writing in
22 the names of the crossroads on the drawing and in-
23 dicating any nearby landmarks.”.

1 (c) PERMITTING UNHOUSED APPLICANTS TO USE
2 UNSHELTERED STREET LOCATION AS ADDRESS.—Sec-
3 tion 8(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 20507(a)) is amended—

4 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
5 (5);

6 (2) by striking the period at the end of para-
7 graph (6) and inserting “; and”; and

8 (3) by adding at the end the following new
9 paragraph:

10 “(7) permit an applicant who is an unhoused
11 individual (defined for purposes of this paragraph as
12 a homeless individual under section 103 of the
13 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
14 U.S.C. 11302)) to use an unsheltered street location
15 as the individual’s place of residence for purposes of
16 the application.”.

17 **SEC. 203. INCLUSION OF INFORMATION ON VOTER REG-**
18 **ISTRATION AND VOTING IN SURVEYS CON-**
19 **DUCTED BY RECIPIENTS OF HUD HOMELESS**
20 **ASSISTANCE.**

21 Section 402(f)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless
22 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360a(f)(3)) is amended—

23 (1) by striking “and” at the end of subpara-
24 graph (C);

1 (2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as sub-
2 paragraph (E); and

3 (3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the fol-
4 lowing new subparagraph:

5 “(D) collects information on the extent to
6 which individuals experiencing homelessness are
7 able to register to vote and vote in elections for
8 Federal office; and”.

9 **TITLE III—GRANTS TO SUPPORT**
10 **ACCESS TO VOTING FOR**
11 **UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS**

12 **SEC. 301. GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIBED.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Election Assistance Commis-
14 sion shall make grants to eligible States and units of local
15 government for programs and activities, such as operating
16 mobile voting centers and providing direct outreach to
17 unhoused individuals, to support the access of unhoused
18 individuals to registering to vote and voting in elections
19 for Federal office.

20 (b) USE OF FUNDS FOR GRANTS TO PRIVATE ENTI-
21 TIES.—A State or unit of local government which receives
22 a grant under this title may use the funds provided by
23 the grant to enter into contracts with private entities with
24 experience in providing assistance to unhoused individuals
25 to provide services to such individuals which will assist

1 them in registering to vote and voting in elections for Fed-
2 eral office.

3 **SEC. 302. ELIGIBILITY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—A State or unit of local govern-
5 ment is eligible to receive a grant under this title if the
6 State or unit submits to the Election Assistance Commis-
7 sion, at such time and in such form as the Commission
8 may require, such information and assurances as the Com-
9 mission may require, including assurances that the State
10 or political subdivision has a plan to engage stakeholders
11 with a demonstrated experience of serving unhoused indi-
12 viduals.

13 (b) SPECIAL CONDITION REGARDING PROTECTION
14 OF DOCUMENTS.—In order to be eligible to receive a grant
15 under this title, a State or unit of local government shall
16 include with the information and assurances required
17 under subsection (a) specific information and assurances
18 that if funds provided by the grant are used to produce
19 documents for the use of unhoused individuals, including
20 under a contract with a private entity as described in sec-
21 tion 301(b), the documents will be produced in a manner
22 which ensures that they will remain readable and usable
23 even if they are subject to extended exposure to the ele-
24 ments.

1 **SEC. 303. DEFINITION.**

2 In this title, the term “unhoused individual” means
3 a homeless individual, as defined in section 103 of the
4 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
5 11302).

6 **SEC. 304. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

7 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
8 this title such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year
9 2026 and each succeeding fiscal year.

10 **TITLE IV—GENERAL**
11 **PROVISIONS**

12 **SEC. 401. STATE DEFINED.**

13 In this Act, the term “State” means each of the sev-
14 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth
15 of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United
16 States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the
17 Northern Mariana Islands.

18 **SEC. 402. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

19 Except as otherwise provided, this Act and the
20 amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to
21 elections for Federal office beginning 6 months after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act.