

House Resolution 21 - Introduced

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 21

BY GASKILL, OLSON, SMITH, HUNTER, STECKMAN,
ABDUL-SAMAD, BERRY, KEARNS, OURTH, T. TAYLOR,
ANDERSON, BEARINGER, FINKENAUER, H. MILLER, THEDE,
HANSON, PRICHARD, STUTSMAN, MASCHER, LENSING,
GAINES, COHOON, BROWN-POWERS, KELLEY, FORBES,
STAED, WOLFE, HEDDENS, HALL, WINCKLER, GASSMAN,
JACOBY, and DAWSON

1 A Resolution urging the United States Postal Service
2 to ensure the postmarking of all absentee ballot
3 materials mailed through the postal service.

4 WHEREAS, voting is a fundamental right protective
5 of all other constitutionally guaranteed rights, and
6 all levels of government must protect the fundamental
7 constitutional right of every American to vote to
8 ensure that the Constitution's promise is fully
9 realized; and

10 WHEREAS, the expansion of voting rights did not
11 happen overnight, but was instead the product of a
12 continued struggle by many people over many decades to
13 expand the electorate to include individuals who did
14 not own property, women, people of color, and young
15 adults who had previously been denied participation in
16 the electoral franchise; and

17 WHEREAS, in the 2012 presidential election 679,118
18 Iowans, totaling 43 percent of all Iowa voters, cast
19 their votes by absentee ballot; and

20 WHEREAS, in the 2014 gubernatorial election 469,185
21 Iowans, totaling 41 percent of all Iowa voters, cast
22 their votes by absentee ballot; and

1 WHEREAS, county commissioners of elections in Iowa
2 regularly receive hundreds of absentee ballots through
3 the United States Postal Service during each regular
4 school, regular city, primary, and general election in
5 return envelopes that are not postmarked by the United
6 States Postal Service; and

7 WHEREAS, on October 30, 2014, Senator Chuck Grassley
8 (R-IA) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) cosigned a letter
9 to United States Postal Service district managers
10 to "respectfully request that [the Postal Service]
11 instruct your staff across the states to take the
12 actions necessary to ensure that every ballot is
13 postmarked and thus ensure that every Iowa vote that is
14 properly cast can also be properly counted"; and

15 WHEREAS, despite repeated requests by Iowa's state
16 and federal elected officials to seek administrative
17 solutions to provide for the postmarking of every Iowa
18 absentee ballot, such requests have not resulted in
19 uniform compliance across Iowa's 99 counties; and

20 WHEREAS, postal service has been a vital buttress of
21 American democracy since our country's founding when
22 Benjamin Franklin served under the Continental Congress
23 as the first United States Postmaster General; NOW

24 THEREFORE,

25 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE, That the House of
26 Representatives joins United States Senator Chuck
27 Grassley and Former United States Senator Tom Harkin in
28 respectfully requesting that the United States Postal
29 Service instruct all its staff to take the actions
30 necessary to ensure that every ballot returned through

1 the United States Postal Service for every election in
2 this state is postmarked, thereby ensuring that each
3 Iowa vote that is properly cast can also be properly
4 counted; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of
6 Representatives respectfully requests that the
7 Secretary of State consult with the Postmaster General
8 of the United States, the District Manager of the
9 Hawkeye District of the United States Postal Service,
10 and the District Manager of the Central Plains District
11 of the United States Postal Service to search for
12 administrative solutions to ensure that every ballot
13 returned through the United States Postal Service
14 can be and is postmarked by the United States Postal
15 Service; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of
17 the House of Representatives shall transmit certified
18 copies of this Resolution to each member of the Iowa
19 congressional delegation, the United States Postmaster
20 General, the District Manager of the Hawkeye District
21 of the United States Postal Service, and the District
22 Manager of the Central Plains District of the United
23 States Postal Service.