

July 15, 2002

Dear Conferee:

As the Co-Chairs of the U.S. Public Policy Committee of the Association for Computing Machinery (USACM), we are writing to provide certain recommendations regarding the House/Senate Conference on H.R. 3295, legislation to address voting in our nation.

Relevant election bodies should work with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), private sector standards developers, and the scientific research community in the development of criteria, standards, test methods and certification processes to improve our nation's voting system through the utilization of technology. Toward that end, we are pleased that the House passed version of H.R. 3295 includes a role for NIST under part 4, section 261 of the bill. NIST would be invaluable in providing suggestions of research topics for voting research grants and pilot programs; reviewing grant applications; monitoring and adjustment of grant activities; evaluation of complete grants; and producing intramural research and development on the security of computers, computer networks, computer data storage used in voting products and systems as well as methods to detect and prevent fraud.

It is important that the integrity of our nation's election process be without blemish to ensure and maintain the democratic system of government that has sustained the United States for over two-hundred years. Therefore, as computing professionals we must acknowledge that there are serious concerns regarding the integrity and reliability of information technology. For this reason, we recommend a strong focus on information assurance in each phase of the election process that employs information technology.

As leading computing professionals from academia, industry and government, USACM is pleased to offer our unbiased technical expertise to assist policymakers in the development of computing and information technology policy. If we can be of assistance to you in your efforts to resolve the differences between the House and Senate version of H.R. 3295, please contact the ACM Office of Public Policy at 202-478-6124.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Simons, Ph.D.  
Eugene H. Spafford, Ph.D.  
Co-Chairs  
U.S. ACM Public Policy Committee (USACM)  
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