

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2005

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to join me as a cosponsor of S. 1795, "The Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2005." This bill would provide voters with protection from voter intimidation and the dissemination of inaccurate voting information.

For years, voters – often minorities, the disabled, and the poor – have been subject to misinformation campaigns aimed at keeping them away from the polls. For example, voters have been told that the date of Election Day has been changed, that an unpaid parking ticket will lead to a voter's arrest at the polls, or that voters with family members who have been convicted of a crime are ineligible to vote. These notices have no basis in fact and are made with one goal and one goal only – to keep Americans away from the polls.

S. 1795 provides the clear statutory language and authority needed to stop these deceptive practices. This bill would:

- Provide a criminal penalty for deceptive practices, with penalties of up to \$100,000 or one year imprisonment, or both;
- Provide voters with a private right of action to seek relief from deceptive practices;
- Preempt the negative effects of deceptive practices by requiring the Department of Justice to provide voters with accurate election information when allegations of deceptive practices are confirmed;
- Require the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Federal Communications Commission and the Election Assistance Commission, to study the feasibility of using public service announcements, the emergency alert system, or other forms of public broadcast, to provide corrective election information; and
- Require the Attorney General, after each federal election, to report on the allegations of deceptive practices, the actions taken to correct deceptive practices, and any prosecutions resulting from allegations of deceptive practices.

This bill is a common sense effort to prevent a despicable election crime. I hope you will join me in cosponsoring S. 1795. This bill has the support of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, People for the American Way, NAACP, Common Cause, Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, and National Disability Rights Network.

Please contact Ruchi Bhowmik of my staff at 4-2854 to learn more about this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barack Obama', with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

Barack Obama
United States Senator