Thanks, Jimmy Carter
by Phyllis Schlafly
Oct. 5, 2005
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Former President Jimmy Carter has finally done something really constructive. He is taking the lead, along with Republican James A. Baker III, to clean up the massive frauds in our voting processes.

They are responding to the widespread public realization that we do not have a system of "one man, one vote." Voting in the United States can be more accurately described as "one man, many votes" or as "dead or illegal man, one vote."

Carter and Baker have presented 87 solutions to these frauds of which the most important are three new requirements: that voters present a government issued photo ID (such as a driver's license), that states clean up the frauds in their registration rolls, and that electronic voting machines have a verifiable paper trail. The big majority of members of the bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform signed on to these reforms, and they must be mostly good ideas since former Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD) (still smarting from his defeat last year) doesn't like them.

Since 9/11 we have become accustomed to presenting photo ID when we board an airplane, but the need for positive identification of voters is even more important. Already 24 states require that voters prove their identity at the polls and 12 others are considering it, so it should be no big deal to make other states do likewise.

Registration rolls are a national scandal; some cities have more registered voters than people. Those who have died or moved away are retained as registered voters for years and years, and the Commission reported that 46,000 New York City voters were also registered to vote in Florida.

The New York Times reported in 1998 that the percentage of registered voters who are ineligible because they have died, moved or registered at multiple addresses is 16.8 percent. This allows plenty of opportunity to vote the graveyards, the nursing homes, the absent students, and the homeless who can be enticed with beer or cigarettes.

In their book "Dirty Little Secrets," University of Virginia Professor Larry Sabato and Wall Street Journal reporter Glenn R. Simpson asserted that 2 million to 3.4 million "phony registrations" were on the voting rolls in California.

The potential for cheating in the counting of provisional ballots is very great. Unfortunately, the Carter-Baker commission recommends phasing out this mischievous practice only by 2010.

Many other election frauds contribute to a loss of public confidence in our voting system. These include the failure to follow the law in counting absentee ballots and the finding of boxes of uncounted ballots after election results are posted.

Rep. Bob Dornan of California lost his seat in 1996 by 979 votes, partly because of the votes of illegal aliens. Al Gore rushed through the naturalization of at least 75,000 aliens with arrest records in time to get them registered to vote Clinton-Gore in November 1996.

Woody Jenkins lost his bid for a Senate seat from Louisiana in 1996 because of frauds, some financed by the gambling industry. Illegalities included recording more votes on machines than there were eligible

voters, using city employees to campaign, and hauling people to different polls for multiple voting in buses that famously remained unused for evacuation from Hurricane Katrina.

The nation's four million convicted felons could be enough to swing future elections. Surveys show that the big majority would vote Democratic if they could, so felons are a voting bloc the Democrats are itching to harvest.

In the 2000 election, George W. Bush carried Florida by 537 votes. The Associated Press reported afterwards that as many as 5,000 felons may have voted illegally, nearly 75 percent of whom were registered Democrats.

In the 2004 gubernatorial election in Washington State, the Democrat was elected by a margin of 129 votes. Even the Democrats later admitted that at least 700 felons voted illegally.

The Democrats haven't a chance for wholesale repeal of these laws. So the Democrats are doing what liberals always do: they line up the American Civil Liberties Union and other left-wing lawyers and then seek out activist judges to issue rulings that elected legislators will not make.

A massive campaign is now underway to overturn state laws that bar or restrict felons from voting. The Democrats are also trying to get Congress or the courts to rewrite the Voting Rights Act to make it newly applicable to felons.

I reluctantly report that one proposal of the Carter-Baker commission is probably pie-in-the-sky: free television time for political candidates. Yet nothing would do so much to reduce the level of political spending about which people are constantly complaining.

The whole process of self-government is at stake if we can't rely on the integrity of the ballot box. What can "one man, one vote" possibly mean if our votes aren't honestly counted?