PS1 for 9/15/88#SAME-DAY VOTER REGISTRATION INVITES FRAUD

One of the unrealistic notions that have surfaced in this volatile election year is Senator Alan Cranston's proposal for same-day voter registration. It would make our elections a farce because they would be dominated by illegal votes cast by unidentified persons instructed how to vote by political bosses.

Under same-day voter registration, political bosses would gather up uninformed, apathetic persons who would not otherwise bother to vote, instruct them how to vote, and bus them to Polling Place A, where they would vote after merely showing their driver's licenses. The bus would then take them to Polling Place B where, after being provided with phony identification, they would all vote again.

Such systematic cheating could be repeated again and again, so long as phony identification could be provided. The occasional election frauds we have had in the past would be replaced by massive cheating. Every close election would leave the victor with the stigma of having won a corrupt election and would severely erode faith in the democratic process.

Same-day voter registration would be as unfair to citizens who cast an honest vote as if banks were to cash checks by unidentified persons who showed up at a teller's window and asked for ""same-day new-account cash.''

A decent respect for keeping the bank solvent, and also for protecting other depositors, demands that no one can cash a check until he is positively identified and verification made that money exists in the account on which the check is drawn. A decent respect for having honest elections and being fair to other voters demands that no one can vote except those who are properly identified and entitled to vote, and that no one ""robs the bank'' by voting twice.

Such identification is impossible if same-day registration is allowed. As a practical matter, officials in the polling places would be compelled to hand a ballot to any unknown and unidentified person who shows up with a piece of paper in his hand.

There would be no way whatsoever to identify the person or to verify the piece of paper. There would be no way to prevent fraudulent votes from being cast and counted.

Same-day voter registration not only invites fraud but would make it virtually impossible to catch anyone at it. There is nothing democratic about making it easy for dishonest people to vote two or three times in different polling places, thereby reducing the value of the vote of honest people.

Doing away with the one-month interval between the close of registration and election day would prevent election officials from canvassing neighborhoods, posting voter lists, and taking other steps to verify the identify and residence of prospective voters. It would deprive candidates of their right to have voter registration lists so they can know who are the voters in their district.

You have to be kidding if you think people wouldn't cheat in an election if they get the chance. In Illinois, we have had bitter experience with long years of ""tombstone voting'' and ""ghost voting'' by those long dead or moved away.

Again, you have to be kidding if you think politicians would be deterred by the threat of prosecution. Election frauds are the most unprosecuted crimes in America and nobody's afraid of going to prison for stuffing the ballot box. There is no indication that Congress is willing to appropriate the hundreds of millions of dollars that would be required to police the polls and prosecute the crimes that would be committed.

There would be no way to stop aliens from voting, since they have driver's licenses and other forms of ID. Forging false

identifications would become a bigger business than it already is.

Some groups would, indeed, benefit from same-day voter registration: (1) Political machines and organizations willing and able to herd people to the polls by pressure and intimidation. (2) Organizations and candidates willing and able to engage in large-scale fraud.

(3) Groups capable of shifting organizational resources to target areas late in election campaigns. (4) Candidates willing to use demagogy to make strong last-minute emotional appeals. (5) Candidates who would benefit from a mass-media blitz in the last days of the campaign.

Same-day voter registration would be the death knell for honest elections and should be decisively defeated by those who care about the integrity of self-government.