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## Conyers says GAO Study Should be Call to Action

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. has issued the following statement upon today's release of the Government Accountability Office's (GAO), "The Nation's Evolving Election System as Reflected in the November 2004 General Election (GAO-06-450)":

"There is no issue that is more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote. We learned in 2000 and 2004 that that precious right was in jeopardy, and recent actions by some states to pass reactionary voter ID laws and make it more difficult to register and vote threaten to undermine our democracy even further. One need look no further than Robert Kennedy, Jr. analysis in last week's Rolling Stone to see how a partisan Secretary of State can use the power of his office to impact an election.

"The GAO verified that the 2004 General Elections were plagued with countless problems and that many states have made little progress ing incorporating the guidelines of the Election Assistance Commission and meeting the mandates of the Help American Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). This lengthy study confirms that while the majority of states did make some changes to the elections process, either as a result of HAVA or on their own, to address some of the challenges that were identified in the November 2000 election, some challenges continue, particularly in the managing the voter registration process and maintaining voter registration lists, handling absentee ballots, administrating the elections, voting system performance. Specifically, the study found that there were continued problems 'addressing voter error issues with absentee voting, recruiting and training a sufficient number of poll workers, and continuing to ensure accurate vote counting.' The GAO study also found that the 2004 election brought a host of new problems citing, 'new challenges arose in the November 2004 election, such as . . . larger than expected early voter turnout, resulting in long lines" and "a broad challenge in ensuring consistent accuracy, integrity, and security among [the] voting systems. . . ."

"This is why my number one priority is election reform legislation that includes a voter verified paper ballot, uniformed federal write-in absentee ballots, enhanced training for election officials, and enhanced legal protections against voter intimidation and threats. Implementation of these measures would restore trust in our election system."

"Today's GAO Report confirms that problems abound in our electoral system and should serve as a further call to action for Congress to take actions to protect our people's right to vote."