



## Senator Feinstein Cosponsors Voting Rights Act Reauthorization

*- Legislation will extend critical provisions set to expire in August 2007 -*

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**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced that she has cosponsored legislation reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The reauthorization bill, introduced by Senator Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), would extend critical provisions of the Voting Rights Act that are set to expire in August 2007 for an additional 25 years, ensuring that all American citizens can continue to exercise their right to vote.

**“The Voting Rights Act is the most important Civil Rights legislation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“It enforced the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ensuring that all Americans could enjoy the most basic right of citizens in a democracy – the right to vote. Unfortunately, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we continue to see attempts to disenfranchise minority voters. We cannot permit the Voting Rights Act to expire and leave the next generation of Americans without full protection for their voting rights.”**

The primary provisions to be reauthorized are:

- **Section 5:** This provision requires that states or municipalities with a history of voting discrimination must receive “preclearance” from the Department of Justice before changes in voting practices or procedures can be enacted. Without “preclearance,” jurisdictions historically would simply change tactics to limit minority voting as each previous tactic was ruled to violate the Constitution or other provisions of the Voting Rights Act.
- **Section 203:** This provision requires jurisdictions with a large percentage of voters with limited English proficiency to provide bilingual language assistance.

Senator Feinstein cosponsored Senator Specter’s bill along with her colleagues Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), John Warner (R-Va.), Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), George Allen (R-Va.), Mary Landrieu (D-La.), Barak Obama (D-Ill.), Ken Salazar (D-Colo.), and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.).

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