

I've written to you before [about problems](#) that could result in many eligible voters being [denied the right to vote](#)

. Last month, a coalition of election experts, including a group from the Rutgers Law School, released a new report examining the technological preparedness of each state to count votes in the 2012 election. Their findings are troubling.

The report, [Counting Votes 2012: A State by State Look at Voting Technology Preparedness](#), seeks to answer one essential question: In the event of voting system failures, how prepared is each state to ensure that every voter can vote and that every vote cast is counted?

Each state was assessed based on how its laws and procedures matched up to best practices developed in consultation with leading election officials and security experts. The report found that all but a handful of states were missing key procedures or systems that would adequately protect voters. Sixteen states, for example, use paperless machines that provide no independent record of vote count. Twenty-five states conduct no audits whatsoever of their vote counts.

The report found several flaws in New Jersey's election practices, leading to an overall rating of "needs improvement" for the state. In particular, New Jersey still uses unauditable, paperless electronic voting systems statewide, and our post-election audit requirement has not yet been implemented.

I hope this report will encourage needed reforms to ensure that every eligible voter can successfully vote and that every vote is counted as cast. Legislation that I helped write, the Voter Empowerment Act, would implement many of the report's best practices at the federal level.

### **Cutting through Red Tape for a Local Veteran**

Many veterans are experiencing delays in the awarding for the benefits they have earned. In numerous cases, I have been able to help expedite claims.

Recently, I was contacted by the West Windsor widow of a Vietnam-era veteran who had applied for Agent Orange benefits a year prior to his death in March 2011.

His widow approached me in February 2012 because funds for these and other claims – including burial benefits – had not yet been awarded. I helped expedite her claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and she received retroactive benefits in excess of \$75,000, as well as a monthly award in excess of \$1,000 per month.

If you are a veteran who has not received the benefits you have earned, please contact me so I can do everything I can to help. You can reach me at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658) or at [holt.house.gov/contact](http://holt.house.gov/contact).

### **From the Mail Bag**

Recently, I have heard from a number of constituents about the future of the United States Postal Service (USPS). Just last week, we learned that the USPS could not make a required payment for the health benefits of future retirees.

I am a strong and unequivocal supporter of the USPS and of the women and men across the country who make sure our mail gets delivered on time. Universal public mail delivery is an important American institution that has served this country well for more than 200 years. It helps to build communities and tie the United States together.

Congress must help the USPS weather the current economic crisis and the downturn in mail volume. We must also act to prevent mass layoffs and services disruptions. I am a cosponsor of legislation to change onerous requirements that have led to historic overpayments into the USPS's pension fund and allow USPS to redirect that funding to avoid defaulting on their health benefits obligations. Further, I oppose reducing mail delivery to five days a week, which could turn even more customers away, exacerbating the already fragile financial condition of the USPS.

However, the House has failed to act on needed postal reforms. I will continue to call on the House to act and keep you updated in a future eGenda.

Sincerely,

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress