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Comments Sought on Proposed Amendments to the Idaho Help America Vote Act State Plan

BOISE—Idaho Secretary of State Ben Ysursa today announced his office is seeking public comments on proposed amendments to the Idaho Help America Vote Act (HAVA) plan. Idaho's HAVA plan represents the work of a steering committee of state and county elections officials, legislators and representatives of advocacy and interest groups. The proposed amendments shows the intent of the committee to more clearly designate how the funds provided by Congress have been and will continue to be used to improve elections in Idaho.

The proposed amendments along with the full text of the current plan may be viewed online by clicking on the "Help America Vote Act" link on the elections web site <http://www.sos.idaho.gov>.

Ysursa said, "Our state plan is a living document and reflects our commitment to continually work toward making Idaho's election system the best in the country."

HAVA was passed by Congress in October 2002 to make reforms to the nation's elections process in order to address problems with voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 Presidential Election. HAVA requires state and local governments to:

- Create and maintain a single, uniform, centralized voter registration system.
- Provide information to voters on how to correct their ballots and request replacement ballots.
- Improve access, privacy and independence for voters with disabilities.
- Provide a formal procedure for complaints about state and county compliance with the Act.

It also provides for training of state and county elections officials and new identification requirements for first-time voters who register by mail.

To comply with HAVA, Idaho is using the funds made available by Congress to:

- Providing electronic voting devices to increase independence, privacy and access for people with disabilities. These devices are made available in all of the more than 900 election precincts.
- Create and maintain a centralized state-wide voter registration system. It will speed updating information for voters who change registration close to an election.
- Establish a grant program whereby counties can obtain funds to help upgrade their voting systems.
- Providing better information to new voters on how to mark and correct their ballots and how to request a replacement ballot.

Public comments are encouraged and welcomed through September 1, 2008.

Interested parties may submit comments about the plan through the Secretary of State's web site <http://www.sos.idaho.gov> or by writing a letter to: Idaho Secretary of State Ben Ysursa, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720.

After incorporating public feedback, the Secretary of State intends to submit a amended plan to the federal government. It will then be published in the Federal Register.