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MOBILIZATION PROPELS MODEST TURNOUT INCREASE

GOP OUTORGANIZES DEMOCRATS

REGISTRATION LOWER, PARTIES IN TROUBLE

REFORMS FAIL TO BOOST TURNOUT

WASHINGTON, August 30 – Grassroots mobilization efforts in 16 so-called Battleground states – states in which both parties poured the majority of their resources because of the closeness of the contest in the nation and in those states – propelled voter turnout up 2.2 percentage points in the 2000 Presidential election to 51.2 percent of the eligible electorate (See Notes 1 and 2).

In all 105,399,313 citizens voted, up from the 96,277,872 (49 percent of eligibles) who voted in 1996.

These were among the findings of a final report on the 2000 election, based on final and official voting and registration statistics, compiled, analyzed and released today by the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate (CSAE), a non-partisan, non-profit research organization based in Washington, DC.

Among the other major findings, CSAE noted:

–Turnout increased by 3.4 percentage points in the Battleground states and increased in every one of those states. Turnout increased only 1.6 percentage points in the non-battleground states and nine of those states had lower turnout than in 1996. (See Pages 2-5.)

-While the grassroots mobilization efforts of both parties served to boost each party's turnout, the GOP outorganized the Democrats.

-Because of larger factors operating within the American political system, this uptick is likely to prove temporary.

-Despite the motor voter law and the increasing availability of on-line registration forms, registration (See Note 5) declined by two percentage points to an estimated 65 percent of eligibles. Democratic registration continued its steady 36-year decline, while registration for none-of-the-above – for third parties and as independents – continued its equally steady 40-year increase. These trends tend to point to the increased fragility of the current two-party regime, in general, and to continuing and deepening problems for the Democratic Party, in particular. (See Pages 6-9.)

-Two of the major reforms aimed at enhancing turnout – early voting (where citizens can, at designated voting places, vote during a period up to 21 days before the election) and no-excuse absentee voting (where citizens need not give a reason for obtaining an absentee ballot, can vote during a period up to 21 days before the election and may, in some cases, be placed on a permanent absentee list and be automatically sent mail ballots) – were shown to hurt voter turnout (See Note 8). One reform – the all-mail balloting adopted by Oregon – showed no positive effect on turnout. Only election day registration, now in operation in six states, seemed to have a positive effect on turnout. (See Pages 9-11.)

1. THE TURNOUT STORY: GLASS HALF-FULL OR HALF-EMPTY:

The glass half-full turnout story rests on two legs:

-Turnout was measurably up for only the second Presidential election (the other 1992, when turnout went up 5.1 percentage points) since turnout began declining after the 1960 Presidential election.

-The turnout increase was due largely to grassroots mobilization efforts, nationally and on the Presidential level in the Battleground states, but also in states such as Delaware, North Carolina, North Dakota, Vermont and Virginia where hotly contested statewide race produced grassroots mobilization.

Every battleground state had higher turnout, led by Wisconsin (up 8.7 percentage points), followed by Pennsylvania (4.7), Minnesota (4.5), Nevada (4.5) and New Hampshire (4.4).

The highest increases in non-battleground states occurred in Alaska (9.6 percentage points) where the state also experienced the largest percentage of eligible voters (10.1 percent)

voting for Ralph Nader and another four percent voting for other third party candidates; followed by Delaware (6.7) with a hotly contested Senate race; the District of Columbia (6.4) due to African-American mobilization; and Vermont (5.4) with hotly contested races for both Senate and governor.

“It is likely that turnout went up among all the groups given attention by both parties, save one,” said Curtis Gans, CSAE’s director. “While final judgements on which groups increased their turnout must await the more reliable statistics on turnout produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, it is likely that turnout increased, at least in the battleground states among organized labor, Christian fundamentalists, African-Americans and social conservatives. But it is unlikely that turnout increased among youth. Whatever the eventual figures show, any return to grassroots politics is devoutly to be wished.”

In the turnout wars, Republicans did better than Democrats. Republicans increased their turnout in every state and the District of Columbia. The Democratic Party increased their turnout in 29 states and the District of Columbia but lost turnout in 21 states, even from the depressed levels of 1996. The GOP had greater turnout increases than the Democrats in every state, except Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

“Part of this is due to the depressed levels of GOP turnout in 1996,” Gans said, “But it is also in large measure due to the GOP willingness to spend relatively large sums of hard party money on voter identification and get-out-the-vote activity, while the Democrats tend to rely more on outside groups – labor, African-Americans and environmentalists, among others – to do their work for them. One estimate suggests that in hard party money, the Republicans outspent the Democrats by 2.5-1 on mobilization activities.”

The case for the glass half-empty scenario has several legs:

-Despite the third closest election in numerical vote terms in 125 years, the second closest in percentage terms and the closest in electoral college vote; despite the fact that this closeness was advertised ad nauseam in pre-election polls; despite the fact that more money was spent (on a CPI adjusted basis) than in any election in American history; and despite the fact that both the U.S. Senate and House were up for grabs in this election, nearly half the nation failed to vote.

-Neither candidate for President (Gore at 24.8 percent; Bush at 24.5) received more than a quarter of the votes of eligible Americans.

-While there was one record high turnout in Alaska, there were six record lows – Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, New Jersey, Oklahoma and South Dakota. New Jersey was particularly notable since more money was spent on its Senatorial campaign than any in its history, but all that money was poured into advertising and very little into mobilization.

-While in percentage terms, turnout went up from 49 percent to 51.2 percent as

compared to 1996. In numerical terms, despite an increase of more than 16 million eligible voters since 1992, turnout was less than 1 million greater than the turnout of that year in which 55.2 percent of the electorate voted.

–While the turnout in 2000 was not, as was the 1996 turnout, the lowest since 1924, it was the fourth lowest. The turnouts of 1996 (49 percent of eligibles), 1988 (50.1) and 1948 (51.1) were lower.

“Nothing in this turnout picture indicates that we have turned the corner on declining voter turnout,” Gans said. “We are still at levels 25 percent below what turnout was in the 1960's and each succeeding generation of young potential citizens is voting at an ever lower rate.

“Some of the reasons for the continuing dismal levels of voter turnout in this election were unique to this election – in candidates who seemed unable to say an unprogrammed word; in a highly tactical campaign that left whole areas of concern off the table (e.g. the cities, the content of education, income inequality, job security, to name but a few); and the fact that while the election provided an easy choice for the partisans of each party, it was a difficult choice for those in the middle, many of whom doubted President Bush's capabilities, but also were waiting for an authentic Vice-President Gore to show up. Four states, it should be noted – Missouri, Montana, North Carolina and North Dakota – recorded higher votes for statewide offices than for President.

“But a large measure of the 2000 non-participation was because of the decreasing hold of the idea of civic duty and involvement. We have made it easier for people to vote, our elections (with the demise of the one-party south) have become more competitive and we have a better educated, older and more stable population, all of which should argue for higher turnout. But we have dampened the motivation to vote.” Gans said.

The highest Presidential vote turnout was recorded in Minnesota (68.8 percent of eligibles), followed by Maine (67.3), Alaska (66.4), Wisconsin (66.1), Vermont (64.0), New Hampshire (62.5) and Montana (61.5). The lowest turnout was recorded in Hawaii (40.5), followed by Arizona (42.3), Texas (43.2), Nevada (43.8), Georgia (44.1) and California (44.1).

The highest Democratic Presidential turnout was recorded in the District of Columbia (41.8 percent of eligibles), followed by Massachusetts (34.0), Rhode Island (33.1), Maine (33.1), Minnesota (32.9), Connecticut (32.7) and Vermont (32.4). The lowest Democratic Presidential turnout was in Utah (13.9), followed by Idaho (15.1), Texas (16.4), Wyoming (16.9) and Alaska (18.4).

The highest Republican Presidential turnout was recorded in Wyoming (41.3 percent of eligibles), followed by Alaska (38.9), North Dakota (36.7), Idaho (36.6), Montana (36.0), Nebraska and Utah (both 35.2) and South Dakota (35.1). The lowest GOP Presidential turnout was recorded in the District of Columbia (4.4 percent of eligibles), followed by Hawaii (15.2), Rhode Island (17.3), New York (17.4), California (18.4), and Massachusetts (18.5).

The greatest Democratic gains were recorded in the District of Columbia (up 5.5 percentage points), followed by Delaware (5.3), Maryland (3.8), Wisconsin (3.6) and Pennsylvania (3.1). The greatest declines were recorded in Montana (down 5.4 percentage points), followed by Wyoming (5.3), Louisiana (5.2), Idaho (4.5), South Dakota (4.4) and Arkansas (3.6).

The greatest Republican gains were reported in Wyoming (up 11.4 percentage points), followed by North Dakota (10.2), Alaska (10.1), Maine (9.8), Wisconsin (9.4) and Minnesota (8.8). The smallest GOP gains occurred in the District of Columbia (up 0.4 percentage points), followed by Kansas (0.7), Arizona (1.5), California (1.8) and New Jersey (2.2).

There are two end notes to this section on turnout:

1. Turnout in Presidential years is measured by the Presidential vote divided by the Voting Age Population (those age-eligible as projected by the U.S. Census Bureau). But in every election year some people go to the polls, cast ballots but do not vote for President. And in every election year there are ballots which are not counted because they are miscast in some way or mutilated and do not meet the standards for whatever counting procedure is used. This, of course, became an issue in the 2000 election and the recount battles. Forty-two states and the District of Columbia keep figures for total ballots cast. While the number and percentage of ballots cast in excess of the Presidential vote varies in each election year, this year the percentage was 1.03 greater than the vote for President, indicating that there were nationally about 2.1 million of those ballots. (A full state by state listing is in the charts section at the end of this report.)

2. The fact that there were significant mobilization activities in the 16 Battleground states was a function of the electoral college and the winner-take-all nature of its operation in most states. The fact that a plurality winner of the popular vote was not elected President and that there was hardly a campaign in 34 states and the District of Columbia was also caused by the electoral college and its winner-take-all feature. Which is to say that this election revealed both the best and the worst of the electoral college system. In those states in which the outcome was close, it forced candidates to understand and speak to local, state and regional interests, it forced them to build coalitions among various interests and it forced them to engage in massive grassroots mobilization campaigns. None of this would have occurred had a system of direct elections been in place, which would have created one great national media campaign in which no grassroots mobilization would have been undertaken. But it also left states, whose votes polls showed would be one-sided, out and created a result that was unsatisfying to the higher end of the plurality of the vote.

All of this argues for change – not toward direct election. Rather it argues for change toward the system which now is in place in Nebraska and Maine, one in which the winner of the state would get only two electoral votes while the rest would be decided by Congressional District. This would insure that whole regions would not be abandoned. Al Gore would not have

limited his campaigning in the South to Arkansas, Florida and Tennessee because throughout the south there would be Democratic and marginal districts to be won. George Bush would not have campaigned only in New Hampshire in the Northeast, because there would have been Republican and marginal districts to be won. Almost every state would have been in play and the emphasis of the campaign would have been to even greater grassroots activity. This reform could be augmented by another – one suggested by Ben Wattenberg – which would provide for a small and odd number of electors to be awarded to the winner of the popular vote, to lessen the chances that a plurality winner would lose the Presidency.

Both of these reforms would improve on the present system.

2. THE REGISTRATION STORY: PARTIES AND DEMOCRATS VULNERABLE:

For the first time since the enactment of the National Voter Registration Act in 1995 (the so-called Motor Voter Law, which established national registration at drivers' license bureaus for first time registrants, those renewing their licenses and those changing addresses; for those receiving social services and mail registration for all) and despite the increasing ease of registration through such devices as downloadable forms through the Internet, the percentage of citizens registering declined in 2000.

An estimated 133,780,000 Americans registered in 2000, up numerically from the estimated 132,000,000 who registered in 1996, but down two percentage points (at 65 percent of eligibles) from the 67 percent who registered in 1996.

“What this indicates are two things,” Gans said, “that ease of registration alone cannot propel people to either register or vote – that we need to make the changes in the American political system, its education and its media to motivate people to want to vote. It also points out the decreasing nexus between registration and voting. In 1996 registration went up and turnout went down. In 2000 registration went down and turnout went up. While, except in North Dakota where there is no registration, registration is a necessary condition for voting, it is not a sufficient condition to insure the citizen will vote.”

Perhaps more important for the future course of American politics were the continuing partisan registration trends in the 28 states and the District of Columbia which register citizens by party. In 2000, Democratic registration declined slightly to an estimated 33.6 percent of the eligible electorate, continuing an unbroken series of declines since the mid-1960's in both Presidential and mid-term election years. Republican registration increased slightly but stayed in the same range as it has been for the past four decades, at about an estimated 25 percent of the electorate and registration for third parties and independents continued its steady rise to an estimated 18.1 percent of the electorate, and nearly 20 percent outside the south. This also continues an unbroken trend of more citizens choosing neither of the main parties in each election year from a low of 1.5 percent of the eligible electorate in 1960.

“It is abundantly clear that both major parties are losing their hold on the American electorate,” Gans said. “With one party split between its conservative and moderate wings and the other without a durable message, with neither party having sustaining grass-roots organization and with continuing either gridlock or non-address of major issues in Washington, there is an increasing perception among American citizens that there is no there there to either major political party.

“While there is no apparent third party or independent threat on the present political horizon, it is an accident waiting to happen should one or both parties not offer reasonable choices in either persons or policies in the next Presidential election or should partisan gridlock continue to inhibit policy progress,” Gans said.

Perhaps what is most telling from a variety of figures including registration is what has happened to the Democratic Party.

From the early 1930's through the late 1960's the Democratic Party was the dominant party in the United States. Since then, the following things have happened:

- Democratic registration has fallen 30 percent from a high of 48.3 in 1984 to 33.6 in 2000. Even the nominal present level of Democratic registration is too high since the region in which the Democrats have their highest registration (40 percent of the electorate) is the South where they are regularly beaten by the GOP.

- Since 1968, the Democrats have failed to get more 25 percent of the eligible vote in every election with the one exception of 1976.

- Since 1964, the Democrats have failed to get more than 50 percent of the votes cast with the one exception of 1976 (50.1).

- In the period from 1932 to 1994, the Democrats failed to receive a plurality of the Congressional vote just once – in 1946. Since 1994, the Democrats have been outpolled by the Republicans in every election.

- In the period from 1930-1994, the Democrats controlled the U.S. Senate by an average majority of 20 seats. They now hold a slim one seat majority, after three elections in which they were in the minority.

- In the period between 1930-1994, the Democrats controlled the U.S. House of Representatives for all but four years (1947-48 and 1953-54) and had an average majority of 94 seats. For the last four elections, they have been in the minority.

- In the period between 1930-1994, the Democrats held a majority of governorships for most of the period, exceeding the Republicans by an average of 14 governorships. The current

lineup is 29 Republicans, 19 Democrats and two independents.

-In the period between 1930-1994, the Democrats controlled the majority of both houses of the state legislatures of the nation for 42 years and had an average majority of 1630 seats in both houses of those legislatures. Today, the GOP is in control of both houses in 19 states, the Democrats in 16 states and 15 states are split. The Democrats have 200 more seats than the Republicans.

-The rate of participation of two former Democratic constituencies – the young and the poor – has been declining at a greater rate than any other constituency in America. And the elderly, who vote heavily, have been voting increasingly Republican in recent elections, indicating the passing of the Roosevelt (and gratitude for Social Security) generation.

-The small donor base of the Democratic Party has almost evaporated. On one level, the Congressional campaign committees, the Republicans had, in 2000, a 12-1 advantage among givers under the level of \$1,000.

-In the 2000 election, as the map of who voted for which party and where showed, the Democrats ran into the cultural divide, in which most of middle-America voted Republican while the Democrats got the votes of a majority of those on the coasts and in big-cities.

-And the Democrats face, in the election of 2002 as in all mid-term elections, an electorate which is more economically upscale (and thus more likely to vote Republican) than in Presidential years.

“What is incandescently clear is that the Democratic Party is no longer the majority party in America,” Gans said. “They may gain some seats in 2002 because of a stagnant or faltering economy, because of potential Bush Administration missteps, because there are many more Republican marginal seats up for grabs than Democratic ones and because the party out of White House power tends to make gains in mid-term elections after a change of power. But they have lost their hold on the American electorate, no longer capture the idealism of the young and the poor no longer see the party as a place to repose their hopes.

“Some of this is due to three major factors: the courageous, but detrimental to the Democratic Party, decision by President Lyndon Johnson to enact the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which had the effect of driving southern conservatives into the Republican Party and creating two-party competition in a region which is more conservative than the rest of the nation; the war in Vietnam which both undermined trust in leadership, in general, and Democratic leadership, in particular, divided the party and eroded the fiscal base to pursue the vision of the Great Society; and President Clinton’s inept first two years that precipitated the Democratic electoral debacle of 1994 and the likely permanent switch of the majority of Southern House and Senate seats to the Republican column.

“But it is also due to the fact that in the three decades since 1968, the Democrats have not

found a coherent and overarching thread of advocacy of the scope and reach of the New Deal, Fair Deal, New Frontier and Great Society. From the late 1960's until the mid-1980's, they were the party of fragmentation and identity politics, and subsequently, they have played an exceedingly tactical game. With the possible exception of the environment and the earned income tax credit, there is no large issue with which they are identified. And, in this year, they vitiated the largest domestic accomplishment of the Clinton Administration – to liberate government through reducing the deficit – by acquiescing in passage of the Bush Administration's tax cut.

“They are on the minority side of the cultural divide, in part, because of their advocacy of such things as gay rights, a women's right to choose, and gun control, among other issues, all of which are individually defensible on their merits, but are more mobilizing for the opposition and paint the picture of a Democratic Party both out of step with traditional values and pursuing the interests of fragments of the electorate at the expense of the whole. In part, this is also due to changes in the interest group structure of American politics. Whereas, until fairly recently, interests held private meetings with candidates and elected officials, made endorsements based on records and promises and freed the candidates and office-holders to campaign on larger themes, now the interest groups demand public commitments on controversial litmus test issues and are abetted in this quest by the consultant industry which seeks small wedge issues to propel their candidates forward.

“The Democrats may win the next election narrowly by continuing their tactical game of playing against the extreme views of some Republicans and supporting constituency specific issues, but they will not have a restoration as a durable majority party without thinking larger,” Gans said.

(“Parenthetically,” Gans said, “It is curious that the Democrats are almost unanimous in their support of a campaign finance bill that would enhance the GOP advantage among small donors and, after likely court decisions on issue advocacy and independent expenditures, strengthen the hand of the very interest group structure that helps make their life more difficult.”)

3. REFORMS THAT DON'T WORK AND SOME WHICH SHOULD BE ENACTED:

On January 16 of this year, the Committee issued the results of its continuing study of the actual impact of four reforms aimed at enhancing voter participation – early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, the Oregon experiment in all-mail balloting and election day registration – on voter turnout. That report was based on final, but sometimes unofficial (and, in some cases, not totally complete) election returns.

Based on final, complete and official returns from all states and the District of Columbia, however, the findings remain the same:

Early voting – whereby citizens can cast ballots up to 21 days prior to the election (the amount days prior varying in different states) at designated places of convenience – actually harms voter turnout. Based on the aggregate turnout of the 13 states which have adopted early voting as opposed to those which have not, the early voting states have lesser turnout increases in years in which the national turnout has increased (1994 and 2000) and greater declines in years of decline (1996 and 1998) than the states which did not adopt these procedures.

No excuse absentee balloting – where a citizen does not have to give a reason for requesting an absentee ballot, may vote up to 21 days prior to the election (the amount of days also varies from state to state), and may in some states be put on a permanent absentee list whereby he or she is mailed a ballot automatically each election – hurts voter turnout. The same pattern of lesser increases in years of national increase and greater declines in years of declines applies to the aggregate votes in the 21 states which have adopted this procedure.

Seven states have adopted both of these procedures. The aggregate votes of those states show either no difference (both the states which adopted both of these procedures and those which did not had about the same 2.2 percentage point increase in 2000) or repeat the pattern of lesser increases (1994) and greater decreases (1996 and 1998) than those states which adopted neither of these procedures.

“While these reforms are popular with those who avail themselves of them – usually those who would vote anyway,” Gans said, “by spreading the focus of campaign activity over a period of several days rather than concentrating it on one day, one is reducing the force and focus of those activities and actually serving to mobilize less effectively.”

The jury is still out on the issue of all-mail voting and its adoption in Oregon, but the early returns are not encouraging. There have been four elections which have been held under this system – the special January 1996 election in which Sen. Ron Wyden defeated now-Sen. Gordon Smith; the 1999 general election; the 2000 Presidential primary and the 2000 general election. A CSAE study of the 1996 special election indicated that there was no impact on turnout, but a study by the University of Michigan indicated that it had a modest positive impact on the turnout of regular voters, but no impact on sporadic voters. The 1999 off-year election had nothing of major interest on the ballot and produced the lowest turnout for any statewide election in Oregon’s history. The 2000 Presidential primary had the lowest turnout for any Presidential primary in Oregon’s history. In the 2000 general election, Oregon, a Battleground state, had a turnout increase of 3.1 percentage points from 1996, greater than the national average of 2.2 percentage points. But that turnout increase was lower than the 3.4 percentage point increase for Battleground states. The turnout for the general election was the third lowest for a Presidential general election in Oregon’s history. And there were 18 states in the nation which had greater turnout increases than Oregon, none of which had adopted all-mail voting.

Only election day registration, of the reforms studied, showed a positive impact on turnout in this study, and then only in the years of generally heightened voter interest 1992 and 2000. (It had no such impact in 1996.) But the impact was significant in those two years of

increased interest. This is not, however, an endorsement of national election day registration. Because there is no check on election day of whether the citizen is actually entitled to vote and because there have been, usually in localities for local advantage, instances of one type of voter fraud whereby someone registers in the name of people who have died or moved, this procedure cannot be recommended for every state. But it could be adopted in several states with no such history of fraud and other states could consider shortening the time between the close of registration and elections, consistent with protecting the integrity of the list of those registered. And both could have the effect of getting more people who have late breaking interest in elections to the polls.

(Included in this report, at its very end, are some of the tables used to produce these findings. CSAE can also provide a full copy of its earlier report with updated figures.)

On quite another level, the Florida recount of the 2000 election and the scrutiny placed on both Florida and the procedures operating in other states have created a demand for many needed reforms of the conduct of elections.

By now one Senatorial committee has reported out a bill, another is considering a differing version and two House committees are likely to report out bills. Several independent groups – a Cal Tech-M.I.T. study group, a Presidential Commission headed by former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, the Constitution Project, the National Association of Secretaries of State, the Election Center and the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation – have all released recommendations for reform.

The recommendations are all very similar, differing mostly on issues such as whether there should be mandates or incentives for change, whether there should be an agency to oversee such change and what agency it should be, and on some minor issues such as the enfranchisement of ex-felons.

But the heart of these recommendations and legislation – the upgrading of election equipment, uniformity and transparency of vote counting and recounting procedures, the hiring and training of sufficient poll workers on election day, the computerization of registration lists and the conformity of that computerization with other databases to permit both the upgrading of those lists and the removal of names who should not be on the list, the dissemination of materials to insure that voters have knowledge of both election procedures and what's on the ballot, insuring an adequate number of polling stations and providing provisional ballots for people who are not on the registration list but have reason to believe they should be – are remarkably similar and should be enacted.

But no one should be under any illusion that they will improve turnout. Provisional ballots may provide a few people with the opportunity to vote whereas they might have been denied under the present regime. More polling stations may remove the specter of long lines. And longer hours, as some have suggested, may allow more people to vote. But the impact of even these reforms on turnout would be minor, because the root of the turnout problem is

motivational and not procedural. But these reforms would improve the election day experience, enhance the integrity of the registration and election process and create greater confidence in the election day experience, all of which are worthy goals. These reforms should be swiftly enacted.

4. Of Journalism and Other Issues:

In the last eight months, the *Washington Post* published two articles of opinion that fall within the concern of this Committee and its director.

On November 5, 2000, two days before the Presidential election, an opinion piece entitled "Turnout's Not as Bad as You Think" by Samuel L. Popkin and Michael P. McDonald was published in the Outlook section of the *Post*.

On August 3, 2001, the op-ed page of the *Post* published a column by Michael Kinsley, entitled "Electoral Hypochondria."

Both of these are reproduced in the following pages.

Also in the following are answers written by the director of this committee which were not published, although the one answering the Outlook piece was recommended for publication by the editor of Outlook.

The *Post* is, of course, under no obligation to publish anything submitted to it. However, the late, tough-minded and very much missed editor of the editorial pages, Meg Greenfield, had a policy of encouraging thoughtful opposing views to both editorials and other opinion pieces to foster constructive debate, and this director was fortunate to be able to avail himself of that courtesy on a number of occasions.

The issues raised by these articles deserve answers both on issues of fact and interpretation. The director is under no illusion that the perhaps 1000 people who are part of his extended mailing list can compete with the half-million circulation of the *Post* and the others who may have read these pieces through dissemination on the paper's wire or on the Internet.

But those who do read this can make their own judgment on the merits of both the original articles and the answers.

NOTES AND SUMMARY CHARTS

1. Turnout – the percentage of citizens who cast ballots – is measured as a percentage of those who are eligible to vote, **NOT** as a percentage of those who are registered. Many election officials like to use registration as the standard for measuring turnout, but registration is an inadequate and inconsistent standard. In the first place, using registration as a standard eliminates the non-voters who are not registered. Perhaps more importantly, this standard is subject to the vagaries of changes in election law and administration. When the nation enacts a change in registration, such as the motor voter law, registration may increase substantially and thus, when voting occurs, the rate of participation by this standard may plummet in excess of the real level of voting. When a state decides to be more zealous in the cleaning of its lists of those who die or move, registration rates may plummet and the percentage of those casting votes may artificially increase. Only by using voting age population as a denominator can one get a relatively accurate and consistent gauge of voting in the United States. In Presidential years the standard for turnout is the vote for President divided by the Voting Age Population. In mid-term elections, it is the aggregate of the race which receives the highest vote in each state divided by the Voting Age Population.

2. This said, there are also flaws in the Voting Age Population standard. The figures for Voting Age Population in common use are the Census Bureau's estimate of age eligible population in November, usually published in January of each election year but published in the summer this year. This is a flawed figure insofar as it includes aliens, convicted felons and people deemed incompetent in mental institutions who cannot vote, and does not include citizens residing abroad, those uncountried due to the Census undercount and newly naturalized citizens who can. According to various sources, there are approximately 14.8 million aliens, about 4 million felons and ex-felons, the vast majority of whom cannot vote, and about 600,000 people in mental institutions deemed incompetent. In the best of all possible worlds, the Voting Age Population estimate would be reduced by 19.4 million. Then it should be increased by the estimated 3 million age-eligible Americans living outside the United States, by an estimated 2 million citizens who have not been enumerated because of the Census undercount and the approximately 600,000 aliens who are naturalized every year. Even with these flaws, the Census' VAP remains the only widely used consistent standard for gauging turnout and has been used by the Committee. A better standard, although not in common use, has been developed by Dr. Walter Dean Burnham of the University of Texas. By using the decennial Census and interpolating for the years in between, Burnham eliminates aliens from the estimates – the largest cause of distortion in the Census' Voting Age Population figures – in both national and individual states. At some point in the future, the Committee hopes to be able to present both the VAP standard and Burnham's in its report. Burnham's denominators would produce a national turnout about three percentage points higher than using the VAP standard, but the distortion is greater in states with high alien populations such as California and Texas. The trend lines over time are similar with a slightly lower (about one percentage point) decline.

3. In estimating how many people did not vote (numerically) this year, CSAE is using an adjusted Voting Age Population of 192,000,000. 4. Figures for the number of citizens who voted in 2000 turnout are final, official and provided by the highest election office in each state and the District of Columbia. They have been rechecked with those offices and against other sources, such as the Federal Election Commission and **America Votes**, a biennial compilation of election statistics, published by Congressional Quarterly Press. In the case of minor differences, the statistics contained herein contain the most up-to-date information.

A number of additional notes on these figures:

In every election there are a number of people who go to the polls but do not cast ballots for the office which measures turnout, in this case for President. Some cast votes for candidates on other levels. Some cast invalid or mutilated ballots. Forty-two states and the District of Columbia keep records of total ballots cast. In the 2000 election, the total ballots cast in these states exceeded the vote for President by 1.03 percentage points, indicating that 2.1 million votes were not included in the Presidential vote count.

In the following states – Delaware, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia – there are races for both Senator and Governor. For its analysis of highest turnout, CSAE uses the race which receives the highest total vote.

Thirteen House races – one in Arkansas, five in Florida, one in Georgia, one in Louisiana, four in Massachusetts and one in New York – were uncontested in 2000. The election officials in those states did not count results in those races, which will slightly depress the national House turnout figures included in this report.

Figures for previous years' turnout are final, official and provided by the office of record in each state and the District of Columbia. These figures are cross-checked with **America Votes**, a biennial compilation of voting statistics published by Congressional Quarterly Press.

Historical comparisons beyond the 1960 end line of the Committee's database are provided by Dr. Walter Dean Burnham of the University of Texas, a member of CSAE's board and a scholar of elections.

5. Registration figures in this report are final and official and provided by the chief election officer of each state and the District of Columbia. North Dakota has no registration and Wisconsin does not keep statewide figures. These figures are deeply flawed. While charts for these figures are provided in the white pages of this report for the record, they are not accurate estimates of the actual registration level. (For instance, it can be noted that Alaska's official registration is 110 percent of Voting Age Population.) The lists from which these numbers are derived contain the names of citizens who have either died or moved but whose names have not been removed. The degree of inflation of these lists depends in each state on the frequency, thoroughness and proximity to the election that the lists have been cleaned. The effectiveness of that process varies widely from state to state. Until 1996 and the implementation of the National

Voter Registration Act of 1995 (the so-called Motor Voter Law), it was possible to estimate the degree of national inflation of these lists and place it at approximately 10 percent. That is no longer possible, thanks to provisions in the NVRA which specifically prohibit the removal of anyone from a list until two Federal Elections have passed. In addition, there is a regulatory prohibition on using non-voting as a trigger for ascertaining whether a registered citizen still resides in any given jurisdiction. This has resulted in millions of names being kept on voting lists although they are not eligible to vote in a particular jurisdiction and offers a potential for future fraud by people voting in the names of those who have either died or moved. States are, however, required to create an inactive list of those voters who would have been purged from the list (as having died or moved) were such purging not prohibited until the passage of two Federal elections. Two Federal elections have been held since the NVRA was enacted in 1995, so those who were placed on the inactive list in 1996 and have not reinstated their voting credentials can be removed this year, which still leaves the lists three years and several million voters behind the curve.

Because of the essential softness of registration figures, CSAE no longer attempts to give a percentage for turnout as a percentage of registration until all the registration figures are final and the inactive lists have been provided.

For some guide as to how CSAE arrived at its estimates of national registration change, the following two charts may be instructive. The first shows 2000 gross registration in the states which have reported both their registration and their inactive lists. The chart shows gross registration, the percentage of eligible voters registered using the official and unadjusted figures; and adjusted registration, the percentage of eligibles registered after subtracting the total of those moved to the inactive lists from the official registration figures. The second chart compares adjusted registration (after inactive lists have been subtracted) for 2000 and the previous four elections, including 1992 and 1994 before the Motor Voter Law was enacted and implemented. Included in the first chart are all the states which reported inactive lists to the FEC for the 2000 election. Included in the second chart are the figures for all states which have reported inactive lists for all the years since the Motor Voter law was implemented.

6. In the Committee's regional analysis of turnout and registration, Texas is included in both the South and Southwest regions.

7. The raw figures provided in this report are, as suggested earlier, final and official and provided by the sources cited. They may differ in very slight amounts from figures provided by other sources. But they have been checked and rechecked subsequent to the publication of other sources' data and the Committee stands by these figures.

8. The procedure used for evaluating individual reforms cited in this report and their impact on turnout was to aggregate the turnout for states which have implemented these various reforms and determine their aggregate turnout rate and change from previous years and to aggregate those states which had not adopted those reforms and their turnout rate and change from previous years. In this report, a limited number of those charts are provided in the back. For the complete study, a copy of the Committee's January 9, 2001 report entitled "Two pro-participation reforms actually harm voter turnout" is available from the Committee.

9. Most of the charts in the back of this report are headed by category and say they are charting data back to 1960. In the interests of conserving paper and costs many of these charts stop at 1968. However, should anyone want the data back to 1960, the Committee will provide these one-page additions to anyone who wants them free of charge.

10. The Committee wishes to express its continuing and biennial gratitude to the many election officials around the nation who provided their registration figures even after being hounded by Committee staff, to the Federal Election Commission whose biennial reports on the implementation of the NVRA provide a more accurate picture of registration, to the National Conference of State Legislatures for their data on party balances in the state legislatures and to Walter Dean Burnham for his continuing guidance and help. We would also like to reiterate our thanks to the Associated Press for their willingness to have us impose a staff person on their busy operations election nights so that we can provide turnout data and analysis as swiftly as possible after the election.

11. The data gathered for this year's report was largely compiled by Sean Greene, committee research associate.

12. Data analysis in this report is provided through a custom database program developed by Gary Corbin and Laura Lee Guimond.

13. The conclusions contained in this report are the product of Curtis Gans, CSAE's director, who is solely responsible for all the sundry errors there may be.

SUMMARY TABLES

- A. Turnout Trend:** This historical table is the number and percentage of eligible Americans (Voting Age Population) who voted for President in each year.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>VAP</u>	<u>TOTAL VOTE</u>	<u>% VAP VOTED</u>
2000	205,815,000	105,399,313	51.2
1996	196,507,000	96,277,872	49.0
1992	189,044,000	104,428,377	55.2
1988	182,628,000	91,594,805	50.1
1984	174,467,000	92,653,000	53.1
1980	164,595,000	86,497,000	52.6
1976	152,308,000	81,603,000	53.5
1972	140,777,000	77,625,000	55.2
1968	120,285,000	73,212,000	60.9
1964	114,090,000	70,645,000	61.9
1960	109,672,000	68,838,000	62.8
1956	104,515,000	62,033,908	59.4
1952	99,929,000	61,551,919	61.6
1948	95,575,000	48,833,680	51.1
1944	85,654,000	48,025,684	56.1
1940	84,728,000	49,815,312	58.8
1936	80,354,000	45,646,817	56.8
1932	75,768,000	39,816,522	52.6
1928	71,185,000	36,879,414	51.8
1924*	66,414,000	29,091,417	43.8
1924*	59,503,466	29,091,417	48.9

*The Census Bureau's estimate of 1924 Voting Age Population includes an unusually high number of unnaturalized residents who could not vote. For this reason, the second set of figures for 1924 turnout, based on Dr. Walter Dean Burnham's alien-adjusted estimate of VAP, is offered to provide a more accurate comparison.

B. Percentage of eligible vote by Presidential candidate and non-voters:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>NONVOTERS*</u>
2000	24.8	24.5	1.9	48.8
1996	24.1	20.0	4.9	51.0
1992	23.8	20.7	10.8	44.8
1988	22.9	26.8	0.5	49.9
1984	21.5	31.2	0.4	46.9
1980	21.6	26.7	4.3	47.4
1976	26.8	25.7	1.0	46.5
1972	20.7	33.5	1.0	44.8
1968	26.0	26.4	8.6	39.1
1964	38.5	23.8	0.4	38.1
1960	31.5	31.3	0.6	36.9

*These non-voter percentages are approximate, insofar as the VAP figures are flawed as indicated above. The actual percentages are somewhat smaller.

C. Shares of the total vote: The share of the total vote each candidate received:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	
2000	48.4	47.9	3.7	
1996	49.2	40.7	10.0	
1992	43.0	37.4	19.5	18.9*
1988	45.6	53.4	1.0	
1984	40.5	58.7	0.7	
1980	41.0	50.8	8.2	
1976	50.1	48.0	1.9	
1972	37.5	60.7	1.8	
1968	42.7	43.4	14.0	
1964	61.1	38.5	0.5	
1960	49.7	49.6	0.7	

*1992 figure for Perot.

- E. Adjusted registration:** National registration and percentages adjusted in previous years for the approximately 10 percent of national registration rolls which are names of people who have died or moved or are otherwise ineligible to vote. This year's adjustment is an estimate based on a greater degree of inflation of the rolls due to the motor voter law:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ADJ. REGISTRATION</u>	<u>ADJ. PCT.</u>
2000	133,780,000 (est.)	65.0
1996	132,000,000 (est.)	67.0
1992	123,649,060	65.4
1988	116,820,000	64.0
1984	114,750,000	65.8
1980	103,500,000	62.9
1976	95,850,000	63.0
1972	92,700,000	65.7
1968	81,000,000	67.3
1964	78,300,000	69.1
1960	74,250,000	67.9

- F. Adjusted turnout of those registered:** Estimated percentage of registered citizens voting, based on the estimate of registration in chart E.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ADJ. PCT.</u>
2000	78.8
1996	72.9
1992	83.6
1988	77.6
1984	79.9
1980	81.8
1976	83.1
1972	81.2
1968	89.5
1964	90.6
1960	94.9

- G. National Partisan Registration Trend:** Percentage of eligible vote (of VAP) registering as Democratic, Republican and Other (Third Party or Independent) in the 24 states and the District of Columbia, which register by party since 1960. (Note the figures do not add up to 100 percent. The balance are unregistered. Note also that these figures are based on gross registration figures. Unlike the overall registration statistics, there are not sufficient partisan inactive lists to adjust the reported figures. Which is also to say that each of the figures in the charts below, especially for the last two Presidential elections, are likely to be lower than indicated.):

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DEMOCRATIC</u>	<u>REPUBLICAN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
2000	33.6 (est.)	25.7	18.1
1996	33.8	25.2	15.0
1992	34.2	23.5	12.0
1988	35.0	23.7	9.8
1984	37.8	22.3	9.6
1980	38.3	21.1	7.9
1976	40.4	20.8	6.6
1972	43.5	23.9	4.5
1968	45.0	25.5	3.1
1964	48.2	24.1	1.6
1960	46.6	26.7	1.5

- H. Turnout for U.S. House of Representatives 2000-1960:** Overall turnout for U.S. House of Representatives as a percentage of VAP:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PCT.</u>
2000	47.3
1996	45.9
1992	50.8
1988	45.0
1984	47.6
1980	47.4
1976	48.9
1972	50.1
1968	55.3
1964	58.2
1960	58.8

I. Partisan turnout for U.S. House of Representatives as percentage of VAP:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DEMOCRATIC</u>	<u>REPUBLICAN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
2000	22.7	22.8	2.0
1996	22.3	22.4	0.2
1992	25.9	23.1	1.9
1988	24.0	20.4	1.3
1984	24.8	22.3	1.2
1980	23.9	22.7	1.0
1976	27.5	20.5	0.8
1972	26.1	23.3	0.8
1968	27.8	26.8	0.9
1964	33.3	24.6	1.1
1960	32.2	26.7	0.4