117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. ____

To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to support State and local governments making a transition to ranked choice voting.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. KING) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

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A BILL

To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to support State and local governments making a transition to ranked choice voting.

1   *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*

2   *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3   **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4   This Act may be cited as the "Voter Choice Act".

5   **SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSITION TO RANKED CHOICE**

6   **VOTING.**

7   (a) IN GENERAL.—Title V of the Help America Vote

8   Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21121 et seq.) is amended by add-

9   ing at the end the following:

"Subtitle B—Ranked Choice Voting Program

"SEC. 511. RANKED CHOICE VOTING PROGRAM.

"(a) DEFINITION OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING SYSTEM.—For purposes of this subtitle, the term 'ranked choice voting system' means a set of election methods which allow each voter to rank contest options in order of the voter's preference, in which votes are counted in rounds using a series of runoff tabulations to defeat contest options with the fewest votes, and which elects a winner with a majority of final round votes in a single-winner contest and provides proportional representation in multi-winner contests.

"(b) PROGRAM.—The Commission shall establish a program under which the Commission—

"(1) provides technical assistance to State and local governments that are considering whether to make, or that are in the process of making, a transition to a ranked choice voting system for Federal, State, or local elections; and

"(2) awards grants to States and local government to support the transition to a ranked choice voting system, including through the acquisition of voting equipment and tabulation software, appro-

1 priate ballot design, the development and publication

2 of educational materials, and voter outreach.

3 "(c) RULES FOR GRANTS.—

4 "(1) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—To

5 the extent possible, the Commission shall award

6 grants under subsection (b)(2) to areas that rep-

7 resent a diversity of jurisdictions with respect to ge-

8 ography, population characteristics, and population

9 density.

10 "(2) AWARD LIMITATION.—The amount of any

11 grant awarded under subsection (b)(2) shall not ex-

12 ceed 50 percent of the cost of the activities covered

13 by the grant.

14 "SEC. 512. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

15 "(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any funds author-

16 ized to be appropriated to the Commission under section

17 210, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out

18 this subtitle $40,000,000 for fiscal year 2021.

19 "(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts appro-

20 priated pursuant to the authorization under this section

21 shall remain available, without fiscal year limitation, until

22 expended.".

23 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

24 (1) Section 202(6) of the Help America Vote

25 Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 20922) is amended by strik-

1 ing "the Help America Vote College Program under

2 title V" and inserting "the programs under title V".

3   (2) Title V of the Help America Vote Act of

4 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21121 et seq.) is amended by strik-

5 ing the matter preceding section 501 and inserting

6 the following:

"TITLE V—ELECTION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
"Subtitle A—Help America Vote
College Program".

11   (3) Section 503 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 21123)

12 is amended by striking "title" and inserting "sub-

13 title".

14   (4) The table of sections of the Help America

15 Vote Act of 2002 is amended—

16   (A) by striking the item relating to title V

17   and inserting the following:

"TITLE V—ELECTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

"Subtitle A—Help America Vote College Program"; and

18   (B) by inserting after the item relating to

19   section 503 the following:

"Subtitle B—Ranked Choice Voting Program

"Sec. 511. Ranked choice voting program.
"Sec. 512. Authorization of appropriations.".