

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) voted with the U.S. House on Monday, June 25, to pass the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2007. In the 2006 election, there were numerous examples of efforts to deceive or intimidate voters to keep them away from the polls, including in Maryland. This legislation makes voter deception - for the first time - a crime, increases penalties for voter intimidation, and requires the Justice Department to prevent and correct malicious misinformation campaigns designed to prevent citizens from voting or mislead them on their way to the polls

Hoyer submitted the following statement for the Congressional Record:

Statement for the Congressional Record

H.R. 1281:

Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2007

June 25, 2007

"I rise in strong support of H.R. 1281 to make it unlawful for anyone to disseminate false election-related information about an election in order to prevent another person from exercising the right to vote. I commend Chairman Conyers and Rep. Emanuel for their leadership in bringing this critical bill to the floor.

"The pernicious practices that H.R. 1281 would combat are not just academic to me. During the Maryland governor's race last year, there were numerous and substantiated reports of political operatives distributing false campaign materials on Election Day to confuse voters about the candidates, including endorsements they had allegedly received.

"In recent elections in Maryland, including the 2006 elections, operatives have also spread false information about the time, place or manner of voting or qualifications for, or restrictions on, voting, or the political affiliations of candidates.

"These grotesque practices are a direct assault on the most fundamental right of Americans: the right to vote and have that vote counted.

“Over the past 40 years, tremendous progress has been made removing the most conspicuous obstacles and impediments to voting in order to guarantee that all Americans, regardless of their race or color, can vote. Unfortunately, there exists in our nation a small but committed group of individuals who will sink to any low if they believe it will produce a victory. H.R. 1281 goes after these people, who are a disease on our democratic system.

“I am hopeful that the House will overwhelmingly pass H.R. 1281 and send the message that deceptive campaign practices are un-American and anti-democratic.”

###