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HOUSE BILL AIMS FOR 'RACE TO THE TOP' IN ELECTION SECURITY



Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va // Alex Brandon/AP

By Joseph Marks
 March 7, 2017
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- Legislation introduced Tuesday by two of the House's top tech lawmakers would give states additional grant money to ensure their election systems are secured against hackers.
- Introduced by Reps. Jim Langevin, D-R.I., and Gerry Connolly, D-Va., the **legislation** would also provide grant money for states to upgrade to automatic voter registration systems.

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The idea behind the Fair, Accurate, Secure, and Timely Voting Act is to give states flexibility in how to upgrade voting system security rather than prescribing a particular set of upgrades, the lawmakers said in a statement. States would compete for grant money based on the strength of previous reforms and on their plans for future upgrades.

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The concept is loosely based on the Obama administration's Race to the Top initiative, which provided competitive education grants based on innovative ideas.

"The right to vote is essential, and we must foster innovative solutions to bring down every barrier to casting a ballot," Langevin said in a

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statement.

States would have to prove they're meeting a number of security benchmarks in order to be competitive for the grants, including testing all voting machines in advance of elections and auditing them afterward.

States must also be using machines less than 10 years old, providing a verifiable paper trail of votes and keeping an offline backup of voter registration lists.

Similar legislation has been introduced in previous Congresses in both the House and the Senate, but never made it to a floor vote.

The Homeland Security Department labeled state voting systems as critical infrastructure during the last days of the Obama administration, which will make them eligible for additional federal grant money.

That designation followed a Russian influence campaign to undermine confidence in the electoral process that included hacking Democratic political organizations. U.S. intelligence agencies found no evidence Russian intelligence agencies hacked into state election systems.

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**Jack Chanse** · 2 days ago

tut tut. anything Obama won't get funded. and red states are upping their vote suppression game. but... clever name.

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