

**RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO REGULATE POLL CLOSING**

2001 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Sponsor: Carl R. Saunders**

**This joint resolution of the Legislature urges Congress to require that the nation's polling places in the Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific time zones close at the same time when participating in a general election. The Legislature urges that Congress review the various problems with the 2000 General Election vote for the Presidency.**

*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

WHEREAS, during election night in 2000, television networks made declarations of victory for both candidates for President of the United States before the polls had closed;

WHEREAS, in one erroneous declaration, the winner of the eventually decisive state of Florida was announced hours before polls in the western region of the nation were closed and before all polls in western Florida had closed;

WHEREAS, when news services declare winners before the nation's polls close, voters in states where polls are not yet closed may conclude that their vote will not affect the outcome and choose not to vote;

WHEREAS, releasing the vote count results for states whose polls are closed before the closure of polling places in other regions of the country can distort the results of an election by suggesting that votes not yet cast will have no bearing on the outcome;

WHEREAS, in close races like the most recent election of President of the United States, declarations of victory before polls close can affect the outcome of the vote;

WHEREAS, a uniform poll closing time would prevent the publicizing of early election returns in one region of the nation from impacting the vote in other regions;

WHEREAS, if a uniform poll closing time was established for the Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific time zones, polling places in western regions of the country could open earlier on the morning of election day to compensate for their earlier closing time; and

WHEREAS, uniform poll closing times in these time zones would significantly reduce the possibility that an election could be tainted by premature declarations of victory:

**H.J.R. 6****Enrolled Copy**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah urge the United States Congress to institute uniform poll closing times for states in the Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific time zones.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Congress review the factors that contributed to the problems in the 2000 General Election vote for the Presidency of the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of Utah's congressional delegation.