

1                                   **RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO**  
2                                   **REGULATE POLL CLOSING**

3                                   2001 GENERAL SESSION

4                                   STATE OF UTAH

5                                   **Sponsor: Carl R. Saunders**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26           WHEREAS, if a uniform poll closing time was established for the Eastern, Central,  
27 Mountain, and Pacific time zones, polling places in western regions of the country could open

28 earlier on the morning of election day to compensate for their earlier closing time; and

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

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

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

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

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**Legislative Review Note**  
**as of 1-19-01 7:35 AM**

A limited legal review of this legislation raises no obvious constitutional or statutory concerns.

**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**