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Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the Student Association for Voter Empowerment (SAVE), I write in strong support of the Absentee Ballot Track, Receive, and Confirm Act (HR 2510), otherwise known as the TRAC Act. SAVE would particularly like to commend the leadership of Congresswoman Susan Davis (D-CA) and Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) for their support of a measure to increase citizen confidence in the election process.

The legislation provides grants to states for establishing absentee ballot tracking systems. To be eligible, tracking systems must allow voters to find out on-line or using a 1-800 phone number whether an elections office has sent out a ballot, whether a completed ballot has arrived back at the registrar's office, whether the registrar has counted the ballot, and if not, why not.

While the TRAC Act will assist all absentee voters, it provides particular benefits to young voters and college students who are among the most frequent absentee voters. Throughout our grassroots network and during our extensive voter outreach, young voters consistently express concern over the unreliability of the absentee ballot process. Students routinely state that their absentee ballot never arrived, that it arrived too late for them to cast a ballot, and that they fear their vote did not count. This legislation will alleviate each of these concerns by allowing a voter to follow their ballot at each step in the process.

Addressing the fears of young voters is especially important because studies indicate that one negative voting experience significantly decreases the likelihood of a voter participating in subsequent elections. Among first-time voters, most of whom are young voters, their initial voting experience is even more likely to impact future political participation.

Finally, the bill will assist election officials by automating the absentee ballot tracking process, eliminating hundreds of phone calls from concerned voters each election cycle. More importantly, the legislation offers grant money to help offset the potential cost to local jurisdictions, limiting the financial burden on local officials with tight budgets.

While many congressional members pay lip service to the importance of securing the right to vote, it is refreshing to see Mrs. Davis and Mr. McCarthy act. We urge you to follow their lead and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Matthew Segal  
Executive Director  
Student Association for Voter Empowerment (SAVE)

The Student Association for Voter Empowerment (SAVE) is a national non-profit organization founded and run by young people. At SAVE, we work to bring young Americans into the political process by breaking down barriers to electoral participation and encouraging youth-led policy solutions. In less than two years since our inception, we have expanded from a small group of six committed college students to a network exceeding 10,000 members with over 30 college chapters in 15 different states.