

WASHINGTON — Today, the three member Task Force, Chaired by Representative Charles Gonzalez, D-Texas, voted to direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct an investigation of the contest filed in Florida's 13th District between GOP incumbent, Representative Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and Democratic Challenger, Christine Jennings.

Today's meeting was a follow-up of the Task Force's first meeting held on April 17, 2007, where Buchanan's and Jennings' attorneys presented members of the Task Force with the status of the Florida state proceedings, discovery expectations, and results of electronic voting machine software tests ordered by Florida state authorities. In their presentation of discovery expectations, attorneys representing Christine Jennings requested that they be granted the source code for review by their own experts. However, members of the Task Force rejected that approach in today's proceeding, deeming it flawed and partisan. Instead, the Task Force instructed the GAO to review the test already conducted by Florida State University, and if necessary, conduct its own independent review.

The motion to direct GAO to conduct the investigation was presented by Task Force member Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., who expressed her disagreement with Jennings' proposed approach. "As for the contestants, I will note that Ms. Jennings' counsel suggested basically competing experts, that each party be granted the right to have discovery, and I don't think that is the right way to proceed frankly. We will just end up with competing experts," said Lofgren when speaking in favor of her motion.

Task Force Member Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., supported the motion presented by Congresswoman Lofgren despite reservations about the Task Force acting prematurely and unnecessarily duplicating investigative processes. In his opening, McCarthy stated, "For over four months after being sworn in to the 110th Congress, all 433 current Members of the House of Representatives, including Congressman Buchanan, have been serving their constituents. The State of Florida, like other states have done for their Representatives, has certified Congressman Buchanan's election. In response to challenges by Congressman Buchanan's opponent, the State of Florida exercised a thorough review, including recounts, an independent task force, and a diligent audit, and all have concluded that there is no evidence that votes in Florida 13 were not counted accurately. I'm disappointed that this House task force in Washington DC would vote 2-1 to conduct an investigation duplicative of the efforts underway in Florida."

For more information, contact the Republican Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.