

WASHINGTON – Voting in federal elections should remain confined to only American citizens, witnesses testifying to the Committee on House Administration agreed in a hearing Thursday, but differences still remain over how to achieve that goal.

Committee Chairman Vernon J. Ehlert noted that the U.S. Department of Justice has prosecuted many instances of voter fraud in recent years, but that current laws make it difficult to prevent non-citizens from voting illegally.

“In most states, the process amounts to an honor system, failing to recognize that we cannot rely on the honor of those among us who are inclined to commit fraud,” Ehlert said. “The fact is, it is possible to register and vote in this country without ever having to provide proof of citizenship. This is a problem, and it deserves thoughtful attention from this committee in order to explore possible solutions.”

The committee heard from two Members of Congress – Henry Hyde, R-Ill., and James Langevin, D-R.I. – and several elections officials, voting experts and advocates. Chairman Ehlert said he was pleased with the testimony the committee received at the hearing, indicating that it will lay a good foundation for legislation intended to address the issue of illegal non-citizen voting.

“I am very pleased with the hearing,” said Ehlert, R-Mich. “We had all sides represented and we will take all comments into consideration as we consider legislation that deals with this topic. I was pleasantly surprised that everyone involved seemed to agree that only citizens should be allowed to vote, but there was a disagreement on how to achieve that goal.

“Our job as a government is to ensure that everyone who wishes to vote may vote, and also it’s our responsibility to ensure that everyone who does vote, votes legally,” Ehlert added. “Those are both admirable goals, those are also my goals, but I understand there can be a conflict there. Our job, then, is to mediate that to achieve both goals in the most fair and equitable manner possible.”

## Hearing reveals concerns about voting by non-citizens

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The entire hearing can be viewed (*requires RealPlayer*) by visiting the Committee's website at:

<http://boss.streamos.com/real/houseadmin/06222006-final.smi>

Written testimony of the witnesses can be accessed on the Committee's website at:

<http://cha.house.gov/hearings/hearing.aspx?NewsID=1359>