

MAKE ELECTION REFORM A REALITY

FULLY FUND THE “HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT”

March 8, 2005

Dear Senators:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support full funding for the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and include \$822 million in the upcoming FY06 Senate Budget Resolution. This figure represents the authorized HAVA funds that remain unappropriated.

HAVA, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, includes an important list of reforms that states must implement for federal elections. State and local governments have been working on such reforms as improving disability access to polling places, updating voting equipment, implementing new provisional balloting procedures, developing and implementing a new statewide voter registration database system, training poll workers and educating voters on new procedures and new equipment.

To help state and local governments pay for these reforms, HAVA authorized \$3.9 billion over three fiscal years. To date, Congress has generously appropriated \$3 billion between FY03 and FY04. Unfortunately, while HAVA authorized funding for states for FY05, none was appropriated. The states and localities need the remaining authorized funding to implement the requirements of HAVA, and the federal EAC needs to be fully funded to carry out its responsibilities as well.

States and localities are laboring to implement the requirements of HAVA based on a **federal commitment that HAVA would not be an unfunded mandate**. State officials have incorporated the federal amounts Congress promised when developing their HAVA implementation budgets and plans. Without full federal funding, state and local governments will encounter serious fiscal shortfalls and will not be able to afford complete implementation of important HAVA mandates. According to a state survey, lack of federal funding for HAVA implementation will result in many states scaling back on their voter and poll worker education initiatives and on voting equipment purchase plans, both of which are vital components to making every vote count in America.

We are thankful that you have seen the importance of funding the work of the Election Assistance Commission in FY06. States, localities and civic organizations look forward to the work products from the EAC that will aid in the implementation of HAVA, e.g., voting system standards, statewide database guidance, and studies on provisional voting, voter education, poll worker training, and voter fraud and voter intimidation.

We thank you for your support of funding for the Help America Vote Act, and we look forward to working with you on this critical issue. Should you have any questions, please contact Leslie Reynolds of the National Association of Secretaries of State at (202) 624-3525 or Rob Randhava

of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights at (202) 466-6058, or any of the individual organizations listed below.

Sincerely,

Organizations Representing State and Local Election Officials

Council of State Governments
International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers
National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks
National Association of Counties
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund
National Association of Secretaries of State
National Association of State Election Directors
National Conference of State Legislatures

Civil and Disability Rights Organizations

Advancement Project
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
Common Cause
Dēmos: A Network for Ideas & Action
FairVote: The Center For Voting and Democracy
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
League of Women Voters
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
Project Vote
Public Citizen
United Auto Workers
United States Student Association
U.S. Public Interest Research Group