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September 8, 2014

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Schumer and Ranking Member Roberts:

We write to express our strong support for a fully-staffed Election Assistance Commission (EAC). A fully-functioning EAC is vital to ensuring that the right to vote for all eligible Americans is not compromised and that elections run efficiently and fairly. We ask that you hold up-or-down floor votes this September on all four EAC nominees. Doing so will begin to revitalize this agency. The EAC's assistance to states and research on elections issues are valuable tools in streamlining elections processes.

At a time when voters in some jurisdictions must spend hours in line waiting to vote because machines are broken and workers are undertrained, we need four commissioners on the EAC who will ensure that elections are run as efficiently as possible, in keeping with HAVA standards. After the upcoming Senate Rules and Administration Committee hearing on the two Republican nominees, we encourage you to quickly hold up-or-down votes in Committee and then provide up-or-down votes for all four EAC nominees on the Senate floor.

In January 2014, the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA), chaired by the general counsels to Governor Romney's and President Obama's 2012 campaigns, reached consensus on recommendations to improve the voting experience and the importance of a functioning EAC. According to the report, "due to a lack of [EAC] commissioners ... many new technologies that might better serve local election administrators are not being brought to the marketplace." The absence of "a fully functioning EAC to adopt new standards" means that the "standard-setting process for new voting machines has broken down."

We hope the PCEA's efforts can serve as a model for Senate Rules and Administration Committee Republicans and Democrats to similarly work together to allow the EAC to operate as Congress intended and to provide much-needed assistance in time for the upcoming election.

The Election Assistance Commission provides invaluable aid to voters, and it must be allowed to achieve its mission. We strongly encourage the Senate to hold up-or-down votes on the four EAC nominees before November; a fully-functioning and fully-funded EAC is critical to strengthening the voting process for every American.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Members of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee