

December 3, 2018

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Klobuchar:

We write to express our strong support for a fully-staffed Election Assistance Commission (EAC). A fully-functioning EAC is important to ensure that all eligible Americans have access to the ballot box and that their votes are counted as cast. We ask that you hold up-or-down floor votes on the two pending EAC nominees before the end of year so that this key agency may get to work on improving elections administration for all states.

As you well know, our election infrastructure continues to face attacks from foreign nation-state actors. State and local election officials rely on funding, guidance, and best practices from the EAC to help prevent these attacks from having a damaging impact on election infrastructure.

In addition to providing guidance on administrative issues, the EAC must prioritize basic best practices, including voter-verified paper ballots, manual post-election audits that provide a high level of statistical confidence in the result, and basic cyber hygiene. Implementation of best practices are key to restoring confidence in our election process and ensuring the integrity of our elections. Anyone added to the Commission should support these standards. Again, the EAC can and should urge states to adopt best practices to ensure resilient verified elections.

In this recent mid-term election, some Americans suffered inordinately long wait times to vote due to a number of problems that could have been prevented. Broken machines, outdated technology, and insufficient resources left thousands of polling places across the country at a disadvantage; as a result, thousands of Americans complained that they either had to wait in line for hours to vote or, due to time constraints, simply had to leave without casting a ballot. The EAC should be assisting states in identifying administrative failures and fixing them ahead of elections; its work is now needed more than ever.

It's worth recalling that the EAC was created by the Help America Vote Act – a crucial piece of legislation that was enacted in the wake of numerous high-profile election administration failures. Many, if not most, elections administration problems can be anticipated and remedied ahead of time. The bipartisan EAC is the agency charged to help all states prepare their systems ahead of time. Other bipartisan entities agree: The Presidential Commission on Election Administration, headed up by both then-President Obama's and Mitt Romney's lawyers, reached consensus on recommendations to improve the voting experience, and the report specifically depended on a functioning EAC. We hope that process can serve as a model for Senate Rules and Administration Committee Republicans and Democrats to similarly work together to strengthen the EAC.



The Election Assistance Commission provides an important role to voters, and it must be allowed to achieve its mission. We strongly encourage the Senate to hold up-or-down votes on the two pending EAC nominees during the 115th Congress because a fully-functioning and fully-funded EAC is necessary to strengthen the voting process for all voters.

Sincerely,



Karen Hobert Flynn
President
Common Cause

Cc: Members of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee

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