

December 10, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Kennedy, and Ranking Member Coons:

On behalf of the 41 undersigned organizations, we urge Senate appropriators to include the House-passed \$19.1 million¹ for the operating and programmatic expenses of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) in any end-of-year funding package. This figure represents \$6.3 million more than the \$12.8 million proposed in the Senate-introduced bill. The shortfall in the Senate bill has huge implications for the EAC's ability to fulfill its obligations under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Congress entrusted the EAC with providing federal support to states to improve the security and reliability of our elections. The EAC must be sufficiently funded in order to carry out this mission and fulfill its statutory obligations under HAVA, one of our major federal election laws. The agency plays a crucial federal role for administering and dispersing federal grants to states to improve and strengthen the resiliency of the nation's election infrastructure. A fully resourced EAC is critical to advance the goals of HAVA and support state and local election administrators in the performance of their responsibilities to America's voters. These important functions under HAVA include the painstaking work of updating the voluntary voting system guidelines, testing and certification of voting systems, election data collection, and research and studies on core election administration issues such as methods of convenient and accessible voting, ballot design, provisional voting, voter education, and poll worker performance.

We urge Congress to support the \$19.1 million appropriated for the EAC in the House-passed bill to ensure the agency is funded at an adequate level. If you have any questions, please contact Sonia Gill at sgill@aclu.org.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
American Council of the Blind
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7617/text>

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Brady
Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
Campaign Legal Center
Clean Elections Texas
Common Cause
Democracy 21
Democracy Fund Voice
Demos
End Citizens United / Let America Vote Action Fund
Fair Elections Center
Human Rights Campaign
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Lawyers for Good Government (LGG)
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New American Leaders Action Fund
OSET Institute, Inc.
Paralyzed Veterans of America
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Public Citizen
Secure Elections Network
Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
SPLC Action Fund
Union for Reform Judaism
Verified Voting
The Workers Circle

cc: The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Mike Quigley