

July 12, 2017

Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-305 - The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in support of Representative Quigley's amendment to the financial services and general government appropriations bill that would restore funding for the Election Assistance Commission ("EAC") to the President's FY18 budget request of \$9.2 million. Current language in the legislation would terminate the EAC. Doing so would eliminate a vital resource for states that is a critical part of the federal government's effort to ensure that our elections are fair, efficient, and serve America's voters. In the interest of ensuring an ethical and accessible system of elections, we urge the Appropriations Committee to support the Quigley Amendment and restore funding to the EAC.

The EAC serves every American voter by conducting research, collecting data, and sharing information among elected officials, the public, and interested organizations. In the last two years since the EAC has had a quorum again, it has voted to accredit a new voting system test laboratory that will test new voting equipment and make further recommendations based on the results. The EAC is working to evaluate and endorse standards and guidelines that reflect the newest and best methods of election administration.

In light of the many challenges faced by our state and local election administrators and the serious procedural problems that weaken voter access and participation, we believe that this is a time to reaffirm our commitment to voting rights and fair elections by strengthening the EAC and providing it with the staff it requires to function effectively. As EAC Chair Matthew Masterson stated during an interview<sup>1</sup> with the Center for Public Integrity, "We're coming off the most interesting presidential election certainly any of us have ever seen and election officials have real needs and real questions about the security of the systems, the integrity of the process, so we're working directly with them, as we have all along, to get them the resources they need to serve them well." States need to enhance their voting infrastructure to ensure it is modern and secure as well as communicating with each other about best practices in election administration, and the EAC is working in conjunction with states to achieve those goals.

EAC Commissioner Thomas Hicks also highlighted the integral work the EAC does in an op-ed<sup>2</sup> earlier this year. Hicks wrote that "In partnership with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Justice, the EAC helped the nation's 8,000+ election jurisdictions successfully address any specific cybersecurity threats relevant to the 2016 Presidential Election." The EAC has proven to be a pivotal asset in

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<sup>1</sup> Levinthal, Dave. "Top Federal Election Official: Voting Fraud 'not an Epidemic'." Center for Public Integrity. Center for Public Integrity, 13 Apr. 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Hicks, Thomas. "EAC Commissioner Underscores Importance of Congressional Support for Election Assistance." The Hill. CAPITOL HILL PUBLISHING CORP., 26 Jan. 2017.

providing federal assistance in securing election systems. Eliminating the commission would leave states without these critical resources and create additional risks in future elections, and is extremely unwise in light of events that occurred during the 2016 election.

We therefore respectfully ask that you vote in support of Representative Quigley's amendment to restore funding to the EAC to the President's FY18 budget request of \$9.2 million. Protecting the integrity of the electoral system and assisting states in modernizing voting systems is critical at this moment in time.

Sincerely,

Access Democracy  
American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO)  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
Arkansas United Community Coalition  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC  
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIA Vote)  
Brennan Center for Justice  
Campaign Legal Center  
Color Of Change  
Common Cause  
Democracy Initiative  
Demos  
Fair Elections Legal Network  
FairVote  
Four Directions  
Franciscan Action Network  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc  
NAACP- National Voter Fund  
NALEO Educational Fund  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Disability Rights Network  
Native American Rights Fund  
Ohio Voter Rights Coalition  
One Wisconsin Institute  
People For the American Way  
Rock the Vote  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
The Voter Participation Center  
Voting Rights Institute