



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
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For Immediate Release  
July 26, 2016

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## **EAC Highlights Accessible Voting Accomplishments on the 26th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) today commemorates the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by highlighting 26 accomplishments in the effort to make voting more accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Today's announcement follows several recent EAC initiatives related to voting accessibility. Resources related to these initiatives are available on the commission's website at [BeReady16](#).

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enacted a comprehensive set of national goals to ensure that individuals with disabilities enjoy equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. These objectives were expanded by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002.

“HAVA established a clear mandate to ensure that Americans with disabilities be given the same opportunity to vote freely and independently as other voters,” said EAC Chairman Thomas Hicks. “The EAC commitment to working with election officials and other stakeholders to ensure that polling places and other election services are accessible for voters with disabilities is stronger than ever and part of our [BeReady16 initiative](#),” he said.

HAVA charges EAC with promoting information about polling places, outreach programs, training of election officials, poll workers and volunteers on how best to promote the access and participation of individuals with disabilities in elections for Federal office. EAC is also charged with establishing voluntary voting systems guidelines, testing and certification of voting systems and the accessibility of those systems for individuals with disabilities. HAVA also directs EAC to fund accessibility research and development.

There are at least 35 million voting-age people with disabilities in the United States. On the 26th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the EAC celebrates and recognizes the progress that has been made by highlighting 26 activities and accomplishments on accessible voting.

### **26 Accessible Voting Accomplishments**

1. **Accessible Voting Technology Initiative (AVTI):** Through the AVTI grant program, the EAC and its grantees produced approximately 45 R&D technological and administrative solutions that ensured all citizens can vote privately and independently, which is a requirement of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). For further information, [click here](#).

2. Under **AVTI, Prime III**, an open source voting system was piloted in multiple elections across the U.S. In order to advance Prime III in elections and foster confidence with elected officials, pilots were conducted during elections in four states: Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Oregon, and South Carolina. During the **2016 New Hampshire Presidential Primary, Prime III was used as an accessible voting option across the state.**
3. Paraquad Election Day Grant: **Under AVTI, Paraquad created several solutions for helping poll workers to assist voters with disabilities**, including a picture guide and comprehensive poll worker instruction manual. To download the materials [click here](#).
4. **Conducted outreach with election machine manufacturers:** During the final year of the AVTI grant, Prime III and EAC's Testing and Certification teams invited voting manufacturers to utilize Prime III open source technology solutions. These companies included Election Systems and Software, Everyone Counts, and others. The companies are now incorporating Prime III's user interface into new voting systems. AVTI's positive contributions also include enhanced paper ballot optical scan recognition and guiding overall machine designs. In addition, in September of 2015, the Prime III open source software was made available online for use across the election's community. This step has the potential to provide further innovations and lower overall election machine costs.
5. **Surveyed voters with disabilities:** Under AVTI, in a first of its kind outreach effort, Rutgers professors closely surveyed voters with disabilities on their election experience in the November 2012 election. This survey offered officials and manufacturers clear data on the more than 35 million voters with disabilities. It also received national media coverage and fostered future surveys for establishing bench mark data. For the final report, [click here](#).
6. **Designed the Anywhere Ballot for individuals with cognitive disabilities** (<http://anywhereballot.com/>): Under AVTI, this ballot interface was designed for any device that allows voters to use their own assistive technologies and mark the ballot from any location. During AVTI research, several findings identified voters with cognitive disabilities as requiring a stronger focus to attain HAVA and ADA access goals. The Anywhere Ballot is designed for voters with low literacy and cognitive disabilities. The voting solution is also the user interface for Los Angeles County's future voting system and other pilot opportunities are currently being explored.
7. **ITIF Military Heroes Initiative Grant:** In working with veterans with disabilities and VA facilities across the U.S., Georgia Tech conducted a comprehensive study of the current playing field on voting for veterans with disabilities. This produced a report on potential ways to improve voting technology and processes for the thousands of military service members who have sustained disabling injuries in combat operations. Additionally, election officials were provided a blueprint for the implementation of pilot programs to increase voter access for this important constituency. For the final report and further information, [click here](#).
8. HAVA contained landmark provisions requiring the secure, private, and independent casting of ballots for voters with disabilities. **During the past twelve years, the EAC has worked closely with election officials to promote these access requirements** and to foster a climate of understanding in providing assistance for voters with disabilities.
9. **[Voluntary Voting System Guidelines](#):** The VVSG is the set of testable standards by which all voting systems are evaluated by EAC. The guidelines significantly increase overall requirements

for voting systems and expand access, including opportunities to vote privately and independently, for individuals with disabilities.

10. The **next iteration of the VVSG contains expanded requirements** covering security, reliability, quality, usability, accessibility, and testing.
11. **Accessibility Public Working Group:** Established a VVSG working group focused on human factors and accessibility. For further information and to join the effort, [click here](#).
12. EAC recently released a **national voting rights card to assist voters with disabilities**. The card is available online in both [text](#) and in [PDF](#). The card is also [available in Braille and large print](#).
13. **[Tips for Making Voting Accessible](#):** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Help America Vote Act (HAVA) require that all Americans have the same opportunity to participate in the voting process, privately and independently. These six tips and examples can help you make voting accessible to everyone in your jurisdiction.
14. **[Tips for Voters With Disabilities](#):** Before you vote in the next election, know the voting process in your State. These ten tips from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission examine the options available to help voters with disabilities vote privately and independently.
15. To help election officials prepare for the 2016 election, **EAC launched the Be Ready 2016 effort**. The campaign has a focus on accessibility, including sharing polling place checklists and other EAC resources. For more information, [click here](#).
16. On April 27, 2016, **EAC held a field hearing to receive testimony from voters with disabilities**. The event was held in Boston, MA and ten individuals testified before the Commission. More than 125 people with disabilities attended the hearing. For further information, [click here](#).
17. In conjunction with the Boston event, **EAC asked voters with disabilities across the U.S. to submit their testimony about voting experiences**. More than 90 individuals with disabilities submitted their testimony to the Commission. To read the testimony, [click here](#).
18. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ADA: On July 28, 2015, **EAC held a hearing to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA**. EAC commissioners heard from voters with disabilities, technology experts, and advocates for people with disabilities. For further information, [click here](#).
19. **[EAC Resolution Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA](#)** and Reaffirming its Mandate and Commitment under HAVA to Equal Participation in Elections – July 28, 2015.
20. **2010 College Poll Worker Grant: Suffolk University partnered with the Disability Law Center to recruit 250 students to serve as poll workers**. This program developed a supplementary pilot poll worker training curriculum focused on creating new materials that specialize in training poll workers to assist voters with disabilities. To date, the Boston Department of Elections continues the program in helping voters with disabilities by providing greeters at polling places on Election Day.
21. **[Serving Voters in Long-Term Care Facilities](#):** This quick start guide Provides information about helping those voters in long-term care facilities to register and to vote. The guide includes recommendations about developing a voting assistance plan within a long-term care facility with

help from State and local election officials. Other topics include the importance of outreach efforts within the community and information about how staffing, volunteers, and the facility can offer residents safeguards to preserve and protect the integrity of the voting process.

22. **Elections Website Accessibility:** As part of the EAC’s upcoming “Tech Time” series. EAC will be releasing a short video and supporting materials to help election officials with website accessibility. The initiative will highlight election websites considered the gold standard in the accessibility arena.
23. **EAC extended support for the country’s first National Disability Voter Registration Week (NDVRW),** July 11-15, 2016. The effort was spearheaded by the 2016 REV Up Campaign, which stands for “Register! Educate! Vote!,” a national drive to get people with disabilities registered to vote and raise awareness about disability rights issues and the importance of the disability vote.
24. EAC adopted a [Transition Team Report](#) that includes a recommendation that EAC make voters with disabilities a priority area of focus and provide leadership to ensure the needs of voters with disabilities are met – April, 2015.
25. **Removing Language Access Barriers to Voting:** EAC jointly convened a [Language Access Summit](#) to highlight methods to provide information to American voters whose primary language is other than English – June 2, 2016. Panelists shared information and promoted various tools and resource materials being used to serve voters who speak in languages other than English.
26. [EAC Accessible Language Translations:](#) EAC translated Voter Guides & Voter FAQs, Election Phrases, and the National Mail Voter Registration Form into multiple languages.

To access a broad range of resources and best practices to help election administrators and voters in the 2016 presidential election year, visit EAC’s website at [BeReady16](#).

*The EAC is an independent bipartisan commission created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. HAVA was passed by the U.S. Congress to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process, address improvements to voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 election, and to provide federal funding to states for new voting equipment. HAVA mandates that the EAC test and certify voting equipment, maintain the National Voter Registration form, conduct research, and administer a national clearinghouse on elections that includes shared practices, information for voters and other resources to improve elections. More information is available at [EAC.gov](#).*