



Ray Martinez III
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LET ME SAY JUST A FEW QUICK WORDS ABOUT THE EAC ACCOMPLISHMENTS... over the past two years, and our priorities for 2006. Many of you have heard me say this before from the podium, but I think this agency has made remarkable strides in the past 24 months, despite some early setbacks regarding timing and funding. However, in terms of the two or three major accomplishments during that timeframe, I would have to point, first and foremost, to the distribution of the \$2.3 billion in requirements payments that began in the summer of 2004 and ended just last month with the last payment going out the door to Michigan. That was a tremendous team effort on the part of all of our staff here at the EAC, and also a tribute to our agency's commitment to work as a genuine partner with state and local jurisdictions around the country.

The next and equally important deliverable on the part of the EAC is, of course, the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines that just went final in the last several weeks.

When you think about the enormity and even complexity of that project, it is amazing that we were even in a position to take that final vote in December. The fact that we were able to fill in some important gaps regarding security and accessibility of electronic voting machines is directly related to the hard work of our partners on the Technical Guidelines Development Committee, the very fine staff of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and of course, the very fine counsel of our EAC Board of Advisors and EAC Standards Board. I think it is worth noting that the process worked almost exactly as it was envisioned in HAVA – we collaborated with experts, election administrators and advocates, then went on the road over the three month period to hold public hearings and solicit comments. In the end, well over 3,000 comments were received and the final product, in my view, reflects a broad consensus of

what we believe, at a minimum, is required of the technology that we use to fulfill our democratic principles. It is an accomplishment of great significance, particularly in the coming years.

In between distributing billions of dollars in unprecedented federal funds to state election officials and updating the voting system standards, we also got a few other “smaller” projects accomplished as well, such as the issuance of our first and only set of voluntary guidance regarding statewide voter registration lists; the release of various EAC Advisories designed to inform election jurisdictions about HAVA requirements; the development of a national college poll worker recruitment project that yielded thousands of trained poll workers in 2004 from the ranks of college students; and the start of some very important research projects from poll worker recruitment to the implementation of provisional voting. Clearly, we’ve been a bit busy around here!

AS FOR 2006, IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING OUR WORK ON FURTHER UPDATING THE VOLUNTARY VOTING SYSTEM GUIDELINES...it is clear that one of the major projects on the horizon is the transition of the voting system certification process from the National Association of State Election Directors to the EAC. This is a project that, when completed, I believe, will be as significant as the distribution of requirements payments and the development of the VVSG. We are committed as an agency to doing this right and doing so in a transparent and collaborative fashion.

IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT 2006 WILL BE A CHALLENGING YEAR FOR ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AT ALL LEVELS. This will be the first year of federal elections since HAVA has been fully implemented and since the requirements payments have been entirely distributed. Deadlines are looming if not arrived, and much work on HAVA implementation remains to be completed. However, I think it is clear that we have laid the foundation for all parties – election administrators, voting rights organizations, Congress and DOJ – to work jointly to ensure that at the end of the day, what is implemented is not what is best for any one political party or partisan philosophy, but what is in the best interest of the American public. That is something I know that we all ALL committed to.

FINALLY, LET ME JUST SAY A WORD OR TWO ON SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT MY WORK ON THE EAC. I received two books over the Christmas holiday from my family that both offer relevance to what we are doing here at the EAC.

The first book, which I am currently reading, is by **PEGGY NOONAN** and it is about the life and accomplishments of Pope John Paul II. As a practicing Catholic and someone who came of age during his papacy, I always admired the strength, determination and faith of Pope John Paul II (I even got to stand in his presence one time when I traveled with Secretary Donna Shalala to greet him in Denver on World Youth Day back in 1995). And yet, before I started reading this book, I had never really contemplated his legacy – we all know he had a profound impact upon the world, but until I started reading this book, it had not occurred to me what were some of the overarching themes of his faith and leadership.

And in reading the book, it becomes clear very quickly that perhaps unlike any other pope in modern times, Pope John Paul II had a clear sense of purpose and was grounded in a core set of unshakable beliefs – one of which was that regardless of a person’s faith, upbringing, social or economic class, Pope John Paul II saw goodness in all humans and believed that our destiny was free will and self determination. The very same principles, I think, that are so evident in the history of our great country.

And it occurred to me over the past couple of days that likewise, we at the EAC have a clear sense of purpose and a core set of beliefs. That although HAVA requires that we be appointed as Democrats and Republicans, nevertheless, what is different about the EAC than any other federal agency is our shared sense of purpose – that at the end of the day, our work product must reflect what is in the best interests of our country. It also occurs to me that this is perhaps why we have ceremonies like this at the EAC – so that can all gather once a year to affirm our collective commitment to an American agenda and at the same time put aside our personal or political priorities.

The second book that I’m reading is called “1776” by **DAVID MCCULLOUGH** and of course, depicts the circumstances surrounding the founding of our country. One of our country’s founding fathers was John Adams, our second president. President Adams wrote a letter once to his wife, Abigail, in which he said: “I study war and diplomacy so that my sons can study commerce and agriculture...and so that my grandchildren can study the art, literature, music and the humanities.”

And, as others have pointed out, what President Adams was referring to in this letter was what my friend and political mentor, Henry Cisneros, has called the “**INEVITABLE MARCH OF HUMAN PROGRESS.**” That despite our occasional efforts to the contrary, life continues and we all have a mission to accomplish.

I bring this up because I believe that there is a modern-day parallel to John Adams eloquence right here in this room – in the countless stories of human progress that our own lives represent. Many of you know that my mother passed away unexpectedly some 8 weeks ago, so this has been a particularly difficult – and reflective time – for me and my family.

And yet, I continue to remind myself, as my mother always did, that as important as it is to improve and upgrade our voting system technology...as important as it is to improve our processes and procedures...what is most important in election administration is for us to not lose sight of the fact that ultimately, elections are all about people – the people who administer our elections, the people who work every election cycle as dedicated poll workers and ultimately, the people like my mother who expect nothing more than equality and fairness at the polls when casting their ballot. It's a lesson I won't soon forget.

Finally, let me end simply by saying that I do not believe my role as an EAC commissioner is to seek to impose additional mandates or requirements beyond what we have all agreed to in HAVA. In my opinion, HAVA represents one “giant leap forward” in the way we conduct our elections and as such, we ought to focus on implementing the four corners of **THIS** law, and not look to take on anything new anytime soon. Rather, it is my view that the EAC must diligently stick to the task it was assigned in HAVA – to distribute federal funds in a timely basis as we have done; to provide voluntary guidance on matters related to the administrative requirements; to act as a national clearinghouse on information pertaining to election administration; and to develop a program of national voting system certification – together with strong and transparent voting system standards – that we can all have faith in. I believe we can – and are – succeeding in doing this by building genuine and lasting partnerships with all of our election administration stakeholders, many of whom are right here in this room.

Perhaps one of the most important roles the EAC can play at this juncture is to sit at the intersection of election reform and election administration and identify the important questions to ask, while encouraging all to candidly participate and offer solutions. And that's what I hope we will continue to do here at the EAC. I look forward to our continued work together.

Thank you very much.

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