

U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Public Meeting and Hearing
Voting System and Testing Certification Program

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District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics

Good afternoon. I want to thank the Commission for giving me the opportunity to offer testimony on the draft Voting System and Testing Certification Program. First, by way of background, in 2003 I served as President of the National Association of State Election Directors, which until July of this year administered the Voluntary Voting System Standards. It was a tremendous responsibility. I believe I can speak for other election directors, when I say we were happy to transfer this program to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

NASED's administration of the voluntary Voting System Standards was strong but limited by lack of resources and infrastructure. Transferring this program to the EAC gives the testing and certification program both the necessary level of resources and the level of technical expertise. I believe it is also appropriate that the agency responsible for administering the certification of voting systems is not an agency or associated with an entity that will purchase voting systems. Finally, and importantly, in recent debates over voting system technology, the EAC and the National Institute of Standards and Technology have proven their neutrality and impartiality.

Since the passage of the Help America Vote Act four years ago, a great deal of time and effort and tremendous expertise has been devoted to translating the legal requirements set forth in HAVA into meaningful technical and practical guidelines. That document - the 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines - represents a huge achievement.

As an election official with responsibility for guaranteeing for integrity of the election results, I believe that these guidelines raise the bar for voting system performance. I want to express my appreciation to the Commission, to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to my fellow election officials and to the citizens who provided feedback and comments. The process of developing these guidelines, which was not without controversy and challenges, was transparent and open.

These guidelines will not serve the purpose intended by the authors of HA VA, however, without two additional key components: one, a system for certifying testing authorities and two, a set of procedures guiding the testing and certification process. With the release of this draft, the EAC demonstrates it is well on the way to completing the second of these components.

Now, more than ever before, it is clear that the process for certifying voting systems must be consistent and it must allow for accountability. This draft meets both those criteria. This is a comprehensive and detailed manual that sets forth clear procedures for registering voting systems and testing those systems,

By spelling out the procedures for entering the voting system market, this manual also levels the playing field for current and potential new voting system vendors. All vendors will be operating according to the same rules or risk de-certification of their equipment.

Finally, the fact that the information collected during the certification process will be housed and controlled by a single agency, offers an enormous benefit. This information will be accessible and available until the event that questions arise about the performance or quality of a given voting system.

In closing, I want to congratulate the Commission on this draft manual. As an election official, I believe this program will go far in bolstering the public's confidence in voting systems. I also believe that by improving the certification process, we are opening the door to greater innovation and further improvements. Thank you again for inviting me here today. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.