

Testimony of Elizabeth Hare
Design for Democracy
June 14, 2007

Good morning, Commissioners. I am pleased to be testifying today after the completion of Design for Democracy's final report, "Effective Designs in Election Administration." Our team wishes to thank the EAC for providing AIGA the opportunity to establish the first set of national best practice examples for ballot and Election Day voter information designs.

During this project, Design for Democracy shared a common objective with election officials: To develop a voting experience that attracts citizens to vote; makes the choice of candidates and issues easier to understand; and assures that voters cast their votes with confidence that their decisions are intentional and have been recorded properly. The benefit of our prototypes is that they draw on professional information design experience, research, testing and evaluation to provide solutions that are successful. To this extent we intend our recommendations to complement and support the production challenges election officials face at state and local levels.

Our report includes research summaries and design specifications for HAVA-required voter information materials and three ballot formats: Optical scan, full-face DRE and rolling DRE. We followed an iterative research-design-evaluate process focused on gathering qualitative data from three core research audiences: Voters, election officials and subject matter experts with accessibility or elections expertise, and sometimes both.

As part of our research, we observed elections in New Jersey and Nebraska; conducted interviews with election officials, poll workers and subject matter experts; analyzed current practices and materials; ran 54 usability evaluations of our prototypes; and solicited public comments on our work from the EAC's Standards Board as well as the general public. The highlight of our research activities was pilot testing designs in Nebraska's 2006 General Election. We collaborated with officials in two counties and their technology partner, Election Systems & Software, to apply our specifications to one- and two-language optical scan ballots and voter information pieces. Coupled with Election Day observations, this production experience, with all its variables, time lines and legal requirements, provided our team with a baseline for current practice.

Our resulting pieces, the design templates, support 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines. The ballots and voter information system are populated with sample data for demonstration purposes. Some voter information materials may already comply with state guidelines. But election administrators (and their teams) should expect to refine and edit the templates to suit their needs. On the strength of our pilot test observations and on feedback from established election designers, we've documented planning and production steps to highlight opportunities for election officials to involve writers, designers and translators (among other contributors) to support their process of adapting these best practice recommendations. We also emphasize the importance of collaborating

with technology vendors as early as possible to incorporate the system with increased success.

We are proud of our results, proud to have worked on behalf of our country and hope our materials provide a demonstrated impact for election officials and the voters they serve.