

**Testimony of Leslie D. Reynolds**  
**Executive Director of National Association of Secretaries of State**  
**U.S. Election Assistance Commission Public Hearing, September 21, 2006**

Good Morning, Chair DeGregorio, Commissioner Hillman and Commissioner Davidson. Thank you so much for inviting me to participate in this hearing today and providing me with the opportunity to talk about our new voter education campaign and public access portal Can I Vote?

To provide a bit of background, at the NASS Winter Conference in February 2006, our Voter Participation Committee voted to pursue a voter education campaign for the mid-term elections. Committee co-chairs at that time, Sec. Dunlap of Maine and Sec. Thornburgh of KS agreed to work with several other Secretaries to assist the NASS staff in coming up with some possible ideas for a campaign.

We knew from 2004 election hotline analysis, media reports and discussions with your staff, DOJ staff and election officials themselves that the most common questions coming from citizens on Election Day were “Am I registered to vote?” and “Where is my polling place?” We decided that we were going to embark on a campaign to answer those questions.

We heard a presentation at our Winter Conference from Sec. Grayson of Kentucky about his new web portal which provided the citizens of Kentucky with a searchable database to determine their voter registration status and an online feature to find their polling place – including mapping directions to get there. We knew from audience Q&A that several states had developed something similar or were trying to implement something similar. We knew that with the implementation of the HAVA-mandated statewide voter registration databases, many more could and would follow suit. We decided that the best thing we could do as a national organization was to pull all of that information together and put it in one place.

In an ideal world, we wanted to be able to host a website that provided voters information as well as an 800 number for those citizens that didn’t have access to the internet. Unfortunately, we don’t have the resources to pay for an 800 number, and with a staff of two, we don’t have the manpower to staff one. So we decided to focus on what we could do and to make sure that we put together the most comprehensive and easy-to-use website possible. We spent \$18 to purchase the URL address [www.canivote.org](http://www.canivote.org) and one of our corporate affiliates, Kansas.gov, generously agreed to host this website. NASS staff then began contacting the states to gather all of the necessary information to put this site together. We developed the site in-house and we maintain it in-house.

The site includes:

- A list of voter registration deadlines for each state, using actual dates.

- Links to all state, county and city web sites that offer an online voter registration lookup feature.
- A link to the federal form for voter registration on the EAC website.
- Links to all state, county and city web sites that offer polling place locators.
- Links to voter identification on state websites.
- A list of primary/caucus dates for each state.
- A list of polling place hours for each state.
- Links to early voting information on applicable state websites.
- Links to state, county and city sites that offer information about becoming a poll worker.

We walk people through the website using seven steps.

**Step 1: Find Out if You're Registered.** We encourage people to check their registration status, even if they think they are registered to ensure the accuracy of their records. The site currently links to over 50 state and local registration lookup sites. We also provide the voter registration deadlines listing the actual dates for each state.

Another very important feature we include in this step is an online Local Election Official Directory developed and maintained by the Overseas Vote Foundation. This is an amazing tool that provides phone, fax and email addresses (where available) for every local election official in the country. We felt it was vital to include this service so that voters could reach out to their local election official in locations where online technology is not available. We have licensed this directory from OVF so that we could put our logo on the directory. Finally, in this step we include the link to the federal form so that those who are not registered, can do so.

**Step 2: Locate Your Polling Place** provides a link to over 81 polling place locators. Where that feature is not available, we again provide the Local Election Official directory.

**Step 3: Know What Kind of ID is Required** links voters to the exact location on the state website which provides this information. We refrained from summarizing this information and simply listing it, because legal challenges that could occur and cause our listing to be outdated and possibly provide incorrect information to the voter – something that would completely defeat the entire purpose of this site. Therefore, if the information changes, the states will be the first to have the correct information and we will automatically be linked to the most current and accurate voter ID requirements.

**Step 4: Save the Date** provides a list of all state primary and caucus dates. This is also the place where we list polling place hours. We also link to states with early voting options.

**Step 5: Learn about the Candidates** is a link to Project Vote Smart, where information and statements by candidates can be found.

**Step 6: Be a Poll Worker** is step we added hoping to raise awareness about the need for poll workers. We developed a poll worker recruitment kit for state and local election officials earlier this spring and this site links to over 119 state and local sites providing information on becoming a poll worker.

**Step 7: Vote!** is of course the last step.

Our biggest challenge is getting the word out about [www.canivote.org](http://www.canivote.org). The site was launched in August to try and reach those voters in states with September primaries. We received some sporadic coverage, in spite of releases going out to thousands of media outlets. We have asked organizations we have worked with on issues like HAVA, the Reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act and other election-related issues to link to Can I Vote? and promote it among their membership. We have reached out to every Member of Congress asking them to link to it from their websites. I don't know what legal impediments may be in place, but if there are none, we would love to have the EAC and other federal agencies link to the site. We have promoted it with every media outlet that calls us about anything. We promote it at every event we are asked to attend and we are still working on public service exposure through billboards, editorials and broadcast media outlets. However, we know that free time and space is precious during an election year.

This effort has taken a tremendous amount of research, phone calls, and staff time but it has been an effort we are proud to have pursued and we hope it proves to be useful for the voters of America.

Thank you so much for giving me this time and providing us with yet another opportunity to promote [www.canivote.org](http://www.canivote.org) and I would be delighted to answer any questions you may have.