

**Minutes of the  
U.S. Election Assistance Commission  
Workshop  
Preparing for Election Day 2008: Empowering Voters**

1225 New York Avenue, NW  
Suite 150  
Washington, DC 20005

The following are the Minutes of the Workshop of the United States Election Assistance Commission (“EAC”) held on Thursday, September 18, 2008. The workshop convened at 2:03 p.m., EDT. The workshop adjourned at 3:53 p.m., EDT.

**WORKSHOP**  
**PREPARING FOR ELECTION DAY 2008: EMPOWERING VOTERS**

**Call to Order:**

Chair Rosemary Rodriguez called the workshop to order at 2:03 p.m.

**EAC Commissioners:**

Chair Rosemary Rodriguez, Vice-Chair Donetta Davidson, Commissioner Gracia Hillman.

**Senior Staff:**

General Counsel Julie Hodgkins, Chief Operating Office Alice Miller

**Panelists:**

Kristen M. Clarke, Co-Director, Political Participation Group, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc; Doug Chapin, Director, Electionline.org, the Pew Charitable Trusts; Pedro A. Cortes, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania

**Presenter:**

Chair Rodriguez was pleased to introduce and welcome Kristen M. Clarke, Co-Director, Political Participation Group, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Ms. Clarke provided testimony that highlighted various issues surrounding the implementation and administration of the provisional balloting process, including how to address the high rejection rates of provisional ballots cast during Federal elections, utilizing the provisional ballot application as a voter registration form and discouraging restrictive rules that limit the counting of provisional ballots cast in Federal elections in order to ensure that “every vote counts.”

**Questions and Answers:**

In response to questions/comments by the Commission:

Ms. Clarke provided clarification with respect to the following areas: The success that the State of Maryland is having utilizing the simultaneous provisional balloting/voter registration system, the need to address the over-use and misuse of provisional balloting, what is being done to educate voters about the rules and requirements to voting through a campaign entitled “Prepared to Vote,” and whether states are moving towards a uniform policy for the implementation of provisional ballots as opposed to the determination being left to local jurisdictions.

**Presenter:**

Chair Rodriguez was pleased to introduce and welcome Doug Chapin, Director, Electionline.org, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Mr. Chapin provided testimony, along with a demonstration, regarding the Voting Information Project’s development and implementation of a technical standard, known as an “open format,” by which state and local election officials can more efficiently disseminate voting information, including: Links to information about voter registration; polling place address, directions and accessibility; procedures governing voting; type of voting equipment; official information about candidates and issues on the ballot; and, polling place alternatives, such as absentee voting, early voting and vote centers.

## **Questions and Answers:**

In response to questions/comments by the Commission:  
Mr. Chapin provided clarification with regard to the following areas:  
Whether there are entities building voter registration Websites, legitimate or otherwise, who are contacting voters requesting individually identifiable information, and the ability that the Website will have to both track the number of “hits” and accommodate the volume of traffic that is anticipated on Election Day.

The Commission recessed at 3:04 p.m. and reconvened at 3:19 p.m.

## **Presenter:**

Chair Rodriguez was pleased to introduce and welcome Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro A. Cortes, President, National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS)

Secretary Cortes provided testimony which expounded on NASS declaring September 2008 as “National Voter Registration Month,” to provide an overview with regard to the various updates that have been made to the NASS “Can I Vote” voter outreach Website, to announce the upcoming release of a new report by NASS entitled “Engaging the Energized Electorate: State Preparations for the 2008 Presidential Election,” and to provide details regarding Pennsylvania’s Ready.Set.Vote campaign, including its voter-friendly Website VotesPA.com.

## **Questions and Answers:**

In response to questions/comments by the Commission:

Secretary Cortes provided clarification with regard to the following areas: Reasons why individuals do not register and vote, what is being done to assure people regarding the integrity between campaigns and the administration of elections, what steps local and county election administrators in Pennsylvania have taken to develop working relationships with voter registration groups in order to achieve the smoothest process possible, the status of Pennsylvania’s resources for handling the anticipated record voter turnout and Pennsylvania’s development and release of two DVD training videos for poll workers.

Chair Rodriguez concluded the workshop by extending her congratulations to Secretary Cortes' recent appointment as President of NASS, in addition to applauding Pennsylvania for making its VotesPA Website available in seven languages, pointing out that this is an excellent model for other States to adopt.

**Workshop was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.**