

**From:** [Reynolds, Leslie](#)  
**To:** [Reynolds, Leslie](#); [Reynolds, Leslie](#)  
**Cc:** [Dodd, Stacy](#); [nass](#); [Milhofer, John](#)  
**Subject:** NASS Election Reform Alert: New Election Commission announced in State of the Union Address, Feb 20.  
Elections Committee Call re upcoming Elections Forum  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 13, 2013 11:58:51 AM

---

Good Morning:

As you may know, President Obama's State of the Union address last night included the following remarks regarding the formation of a new commission on voting:

*"Defending our freedom, though, is not just the job of our military alone. We must all do our part to make sure our God-given rights are protected here at home. That includes one of the most fundamental right of a democracy: the right to vote. When any American, no matter where they live or what their party, are denied that right because they can't afford to wait for five or six or seven hours just to cast their ballot, we are betraying our ideals. So tonight, I'm announcing a nonpartisan commission to improve the voting experience in America. And it definitely needs improvement. I'm asking two long-time experts in the field -- who, by the way, recently served as the top attorneys for my campaign and for Governor Romney's campaign -- to lead it. We can fix this, and we will. The American people demand it, and so does our democracy."*

Here is some more information from the [Huffington Post](#) on the lawyers who will lead the commission, as well as some details on its stated mission. The basic upshot from the HuffPost reads as follows:

*"UPDATE: 10:45 p.m. -- The White House said Tuesday night that the new Presidential Commission on Election Administration would focus on "common-sense, non-partisan solutions" and "develop recommendations for state and local election officials to reduce waiting times at the polls and improve all citizens' voting experience." It will address voters' experience at the polls and will take input from customer service experts. The commission will also make recommendations to improve the voting experience of members of the military, overseas voters, voters with disabilities, and voter with limited English proficiency."*

We are taking immediate steps to bring you more information on the new commission. We have a meeting scheduled with our IGA contact at the White House tomorrow at 9:00 AM. We are also planning to send a letter to the White House urging the President and the new commission to utilize the expertise of Secretaries of State and to iterate our members' [shared principles on federal approaches to election reform](#).

On a related note, we have also received a [press release](#) this morning from House Administration Chair Candice Miller, stating her opposition to the new commission and her support for state-based solutions.

Election Committee members, don't forget to mark your calendar and prepare to discuss your thoughts on these developments during our upcoming Elections Committee conference call, scheduled for Wednesday, February 20th at 3:00 PM EST. We will be focusing on an election forum that was discussed and approved at the winter meeting. The request to bring Secretaries of State together to review the 2012 election cycle and identify areas of success and areas for improvement ties into the national dialogue that is playing out here in Washington, highlighting the important voice and collective expertise that our association members bring to the process.

Thanks,  
Leslie

Leslie Reynolds  
Executive Director  
National Association of Secretaries of State  
444 N. Capitol Street, N.W.  
Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-624-3525  
[www.nass.org](http://www.nass.org)