



NEWS RELEASE

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National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Statement on Remarks Made by NBC News Correspondent Andrea Mitchell

Secretaries of State Disappointed by Journalist's Suggestion that Election Officials Will Prevent a Fair Election

Washington, DC—The bipartisan membership of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) is deeply disappointed by inappropriate remarks made by NBC News Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent Andrea Mitchell during MSNBC's live coverage of the Kentucky and Oregon presidential primaries on Tuesday, May 20. In discussing Democratic Party campaign strategy for November 2008, Ms. Mitchell suggested that Secretaries of State in "red states" would seek to prevent a fair vote in the November 2008 general election.

Based upon transcripts of Tuesday's broadcast, Ms. Mitchell specifically said the following, "Other people, I should point out, other Clinton loyalists, but realists, say that that electoral map is a stretch in one regard: There are, you know, Republican governors and secretaries of state, if you will, Katherine Harris-type election officials in those states. So, even though he [Obama] may have won primaries or caucuses in those states, has to go up against the establishment, which would be Republican, and he has to figure out a way to get a fair vote if he's the nominee in those red states."

This speculative statement is unacceptable and unfair to all election officials whose integrity was seemingly called into question solely upon the basis of their political party affiliation.

Secretaries of State work diligently to maintain public confidence in our ability to conduct elections in a fair and neutral manner. NASS members collectively affirmed this commitment in a 2005 statement, along with the addition of an ethical standards provision to the association's bylaws.

Many Secretaries of State do not serve on political campaign committees or publicly endorse candidates for office, while others are limited in their political activity due to state ethics codes or restrictions that far exceed those for other statewide office holders.

As our members—regardless of political party affiliation—strive to deliver fair, accurate and impartial elections during the 2008 presidential election cycle and beyond, we respectfully demand that journalists be held to the same high standards of integrity and objectivity.

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